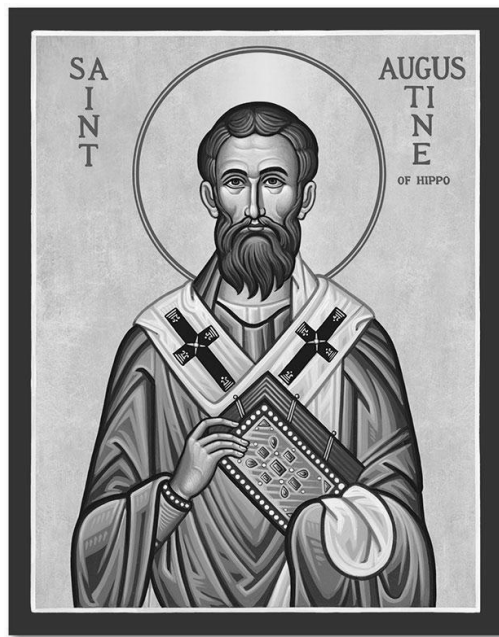


ST. AUGUSTINE THE LITERAL MEANING OF GENESIS (Volume 2)

DE GENESI AD LITTERAM

Volume II Books 7–12



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ST. AUGUSTINE THE LITERAL MEANING OF GENESIS

Books 7–12

BOOK SEVEN

THE CREATION OF THE MAN'S SOUL

CHAPTER 1 *The creation of the man's soul must now be considered in the light of Gen. 2:7.*

1. And God formed man of dust from the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man was made a living being. At the beginning of the preceding book I undertook to examine these words of Scripture; and I treated in a sufficiently thorough way, I believe, the creation of man, especially of his body, according to what seemed to me to be the meaning of Scripture. But since it is no simple matter to understand the soul, I thought it wise to leave that question to this book, not knowing how much the Lord would help me in my desire to say the right thing. But I did know this much: that I was not going to say the right thing unless He helped me. To say the right thing is to say what is true and appropriate, not arbitrarily rejecting anything or thoughtlessly affirming anything so long as it is doubtful where the truth lies in the light of the faith and Christian doctrine, but unhesitatingly asserting what can be taught on the basis of the obvious facts of the case or the certain authority of Scripture.
2. First, then, let us examine the statement in Scripture which says, God breathed into his face the breath of life. Some manuscripts read, He inspired into his face. But since the Greek codices have ἐνεφύσησεν, it is clear that the Latin should be *flavit* or *sufflavit*. In the preceding book I discussed the question of "the hands of God" when man was represented as formed from the slime of the earth. What, therefore, need I say now about the statement, God breathed, except that He did not breathe with mouth and lips any more than He formed man with bodily hands?

3. Nevertheless, by this word I think Scripture gives us considerable help in dealing with a difficult question.

CHAPTER 2 *The breathing of the soul into man does not imply that God gave man something of His substance.*

Some interpreters, basing their theory on the word "breathed," have thought that the soul is something from the very substance of God, that is, something of the nature which is His. They hold this opinion because when man breathes he casts forth something of himself in his breath. But for this very reason we should be cautioned to reject this opinion as opposed to the Catholic faith. For we believe that the nature and substance of God, which is in the Trinity, as many believe but few understand, is absolutely unchangeable. But who doubts that the soul can be changed for better or worse? Hence, it is sacrilegious to suppose that the soul and God are of one substance. For this simply amounts to believing that He is changeable. Hence, we must believe and understand without any shadow of a doubt what the true faith teaches, namely, that the soul is from God as a thing which He made, not as something from His own nature whether generated by Him or proceeding from Him in any way whatsoever.

CHAPTER 3 *Further reasons to prove that the soul is not part of God's substance.*

4. How then, our adversaries object, is it written, God breathed into his face, and man was made a living being, if the soul is not part of God, or in fact the substance of God? Indeed, from the very word that is used it is quite clear that this is not the case. For when man breathes forth, his soul certainly moves the body, which is subject to it, and makes the breath from the body, not from itself. Our critics are surely not so unperceptive as to fail to see that when we wish to breathe forth, our breath is produced by the natural inhalation and exhalation of the air that surrounds us. And even on the supposition that in breathing out we breathed forth something which was not from the surrounding air which we inhale and exhale,

but from our own body, nevertheless, body and soul are different by nature, and to this fact our opponents agree. Hence, it is also true that the soul, which governs and moves the body, is substantially different from the breath, which the soul regulates and causes when it produces it from the body subject to it and not from its own substance, to which the body is subject. If we are permitted a comparison of two things vastly different, we may say that as the soul rules the body, God rules His creatures. Why, then, can we not understand that God made the soul from a creature subject to Him, in view of the fact that He is said to have breathed it forth? For although the soul does not rule its body as God does the universe which He made, nevertheless, it produces breath by its motion and does not make it out of its own substance.

5. We might say that the breath of God is not the soul of man but that God by breathing forth made the soul of man. But we must not think that the creatures He made by a word are better than what He made by a breath, in view of the fact that a word is better than a breath in us. Nevertheless, according to the account I have given above, there is no reason to hesitate to call the soul the breath of God, so long as we understand that it is not God's nature and substance, but simply that to breathe forth is to produce a breath, and that to produce a breath is to produce the soul. What God says through Isaiah agrees with this explanation: For My spirit goes forth from Me, and I have made every breath. That He is not speaking of any corporeal breath is clear from the words that follow. For when He had said, I have made every breath, He added, And because of sin I afflicted him for a time and smote him. What, therefore, is the meaning of breath except the soul, which because of sin has been smitten and afflicted? What, then, is the sense of I have made every breath except "I have made every soul"?

CHAPTER 4 *Even one who holds that God is the world soul would not logically maintain that the breath of God is part of His substance.*

6. If, then, we were to say that God is, so to speak, the soul of this corporeal world, and that the world itself is to Him a kind of body of one living being, we should not truly say that He made the soul of man by His breath, except in so far as we should speak of a material soul made from the surrounding air which, as part of His body, would be subject to Him. But what He would have given by breathing we should have to suppose He did not give from Himself but from the air subject to Him as part of His body, just as the soul produces breath not from itself but from something similarly subject to it, namely, its body. But since we say not only that the body of the world is subject to God, but that He is above every creature, corporeal and spiritual, we cannot believe that He made the soul by breathing it forth from Himself or from the corporeal elements of the world.

CHAPTER 5 *When breathing the soul into Adam, did God create it out of nothing or form it from some previously created spiritual being?*

7. What, then, are we to say about the creation of the soul? Did God make it from that which was entirely nonexistent, that is, from nothing, or from something which He had already made in the spiritual order but which was not yet a soul? This is a real problem. For if we do not believe that God still creates anything from nothing after He has created all things simultaneously, and if we therefore believe that He rested from all the works which He had begun to make and had finished, so that whatever He would subsequently make He would make from these works, I do not see how we can understand that He still creates souls from nothing. Perhaps we should say that in the works of the first six days God made the hidden day and (if this is what we are to believe) the spiritual and intellectual realm, that is, the united company of angelic spirits; and besides them, the world, namely, heaven and earth; and then we should perhaps add that in these existing

beings God created the reason-principles of other beings to come in the future, but not the beings themselves. Otherwise, if these beings had already been created as they were destined to be, they would no longer be destined to be. And if that is so, there was not yet existing in the created world any human soul. A human soul first began to exist when God breathed forth and made it and put it into man.

8. But this does not solve the problem. We want to know whether God created from nothing the being which is called the soul and which before that moment was not existing, on the supposition that His breath would not come from some subordinate substance as is the case with the breath which the soul exhales from the body, as we have already pointed out. Was God's breath, then, quite simply made from nothing when it pleased Him to breathe forth and His breath became the soul of man? Or was there already existing some spiritual entity which, whatever its nature, was not yet soul, and from this entity was there made the breath of God, identified with the soul itself? There is a parallel with man's body, which was nonexistent before God formed it from the slime or dust of the earth. For dust or slime was not human flesh; nevertheless, it was something from which would be made a being which was not yet in existence.

CHAPTER 6 *Was there some previously created spiritual material for the soul as there was earth for the body?*

9. Is it believable, then, that in the works of the first six days God created not only the causal reason of the future human body but also the material from which it would be made, namely, earth from whose slime or dust the body would be formed, whereas in the case of the soul He created only the causal reason according to which it would be made and not any kind of material sui generis from which it would be made? For if the soul were something immutable, we should have no need to look for its own special kind of matter; however, its mutability

shows it sometimes deformed by vice and deception and formed by virtue and true doctrine, its nature as soul meanwhile remaining, just as the flesh remains by nature flesh though it is glowing with health or disfigured by disease or wounds. But the flesh, before becoming flesh and having its natural beauty or deformity, also had the material, namely, earth, from which it was made into flesh. Perhaps, then, the soul, before it was made into the nature of soul, whose beauty is virtue and whose deformity is vice, could have had its own kind of spiritual material which was not yet soul, just as the earth from which the flesh was made was already something, although it was not flesh.

10. But there is a difference. For the earth filled the lowest part of the world before the body of man was made from it, and it gave to the world its whole substance so that even if no flesh of any living being were made from it, by its own form it would fill out the structure and mass of the world; and this is why the world is referred to as heaven and earth.

CHAPTER 7 Difficulties connected with supposing that there was a spiritual material out of which the soul was made.

If there was any such thing as a spiritual material from which the soul was made, or if there is any such thing from which souls are now made, what precisely is it? What is its name, what is its form, what use does it have in the works of creation? Is it living or nonliving? If it lives, what does it do? What does it produce in the world? Does it live a happy life or a wretched life or neither? Does it give life to anything? Or is it without this function also, and does it rest quietly in some inmost recess of the universe without active perception and vital motion? For if there was no life whatsoever in it, how could it be some sort of incorporeal, nonliving material for life yet to come? The supposition, then, is false, or this is a mystery beyond our comprehension. But if it was already living neither happily nor wretchedly, how was it rational? But if it was made rational at the

time when the human soul was made from this material, was irrational life the material of the rational (that is, human) soul? What, then, was the difference between this life and the life of cattle? Had it only the possibility of rational life and not yet the exercise of it? For we see that the soul of an infant, which is certainly the soul of a human being, has not yet begun to use reason, and nevertheless we call it a rational soul. Why, then, should we not believe that similarly in this material from which the soul has been made, the life of thought was dormant, just as in the infant's soul, which is certainly human, rational life is dormant?

CHAPTER 8 *Was the life from which the soul of man is said to have been made a happy life? Difficulties with this.*

11. If the life from which the soul of man was made was already a happy life, then the soul has been given a life less excellent, and accordingly that other life is not the material of the soul, but the soul is rather an inferior emanation from it. Now, when a material is formed, especially by God, it is certainly improved by the formation. But even if the human soul could be understood as an emanation of some form of life created in a blessed state by God, it could not be thought of as having begun to exist in a state according to its merits except from the moment it has begun to live its own life when it has been made a soul animating a body, using its senses as messengers, and conscious of its own individual life with will, intellect, and memory. For if there is some creature from which God breathed this emanation into the flesh He formed, creating the soul by what might be called a breathing, and if the source of the emanation is in a blessed state, it is not in any way moved or changed nor does it lose anything when the effluence which becomes the soul flows from it.

CHAPTER 9 *Difficulties in assuming an irrational soul as the material. Transmigration rejected.*

For it is not a body and therefore cannot be diminished by exhalation.

12. But if an irrational soul is somehow the material from which the rational (namely, human) soul is made, again a question arises about the source from which this irrational soul comes. For it too can be made only by the Creator of all beings. Was it made from corporeal matter? If so, why can we not say the same about the rational soul? Surely, if it is granted that a certain effect can be produced step by step, no one will deny that God can accomplish the same result even if He abridges the process. Consequently, whatever the intermediate steps, if a body is the material of an irrational soul, and the irrational soul is the material of the rational soul, there is no doubt that the body is the material of the rational soul. But I know of no one who has ever ventured such an opinion except a person who holds that the soul itself is nothing but a kind of body.

13. If we concede that an irrational soul is the basic matter out of which the rational soul is made, we must be on our guard against the danger of believing that there is the possibility of a transmigration of souls from beasts to men (a position which flatly contradicts the truth and the Catholic faith). For if an irrational soul is changed for the better, it will become the soul of a human being; similarly, if a human soul is changed for the worse, it will become the soul of a beast. Some philosophers who have held such ridiculous opinions have been a cause of embarrassment to their later followers, who have said that their predecessors did not take such a position but were simply misunderstood. And I believe that this is so. In somewhat the same way one might adopt such an interpretation of our Scripture where it says, Man, for all his dignity, has not understood; he has been joined with senseless beasts and has become like them; or again where it says, Deliver not up to beasts the soul that confesses to Thee. For there are some heretics who read the Catholic Scripture, and the only reason they are heretics is that their interpretation is wrong, and they obstinately maintain their false opinions against the truth of these books. But whatever the opinion of philosophers regarding the transmigration of souls, it is not consistent with the Catholic faith to

believe that the souls of beasts enter into men or that the souls of men enter into beasts.

CHAPTER 10 *Further arguments against transmigration.*

14. History proclaims and Scripture teaches that men by their way of life can become like the beasts of the field. Hence it is that the Psalmist whom I have quoted says, Man, for all his dignity, has not understood; he has been joined with senseless beasts and has become like them. But this refers to the present life, not to the life after death. Hence, when the Psalmist said, Deliver not up to beasts the soul that confesses to Thee, he did not wish his soul to be handed over to the power of such beasts as the Lord bids us beware of when He says that they are clothed in the vesture of sheep but inwardly are ravenous wolves; or he did not wish his soul to be handed over to the Devil and his angels, for he is called a lion and a dragon.
15. What kind of argument do philosophers offer who think that the souls of human beings can be sent into beasts, or the souls of beasts sent into human beings after death? They argue, of course, that men's ways of acting would draw them to like creatures: misers to ants, plunderers to kites, violent and proud men to lions, voluptuaries to pigs, and so forth. These are the arguments which they assert, but they do not advert to the fact that by this reasoning it would be quite impossible for the soul of a beast to enter into a human being after death. For a pig will certainly not be more like a human being than a pig; and when lions are tamed, they become more like dogs or even sheep than men. Hence, beasts do not give up the ways of beasts, and those that are somewhat unlike the others are none the less more like their own kind than like humans. Their difference from human beings is far greater than their difference from beasts. These souls of beasts, then, will never be souls of men if like attracts like. Now, if this argument of the proponents of transmigration is false, how can their theory be true, since they do not offer any

other argument to establish even the probability, if not the truth, of the theory? I am inclined to agree with their later followers who say that men of old put this account in their books intending that it would be understood as referring to this life, where men become like beasts by the wickedness and shamefulness of their ways and thus in a sense are turned into beasts. By this means they hoped to show erring men their degradation and thus recall them from their wicked desires.

CHAPTER 11 *The absurd theories of the Manicheans about transmigration.*

16. Stories are told about persons who have had some kind of recollection of having been in the bodies of animals. Now, either these stories are false, or an illusion has been produced by demons in the minds of these persons. For if it happens in sleep that a man can be induced by a false recollection into seeming to recall that he was what he was not or that he did what he did not do, it should not seem strange that demons, by God's just judgment hidden from us, may be allowed to effect something similar in men's minds even in their waking hours.
17. The Manichees, who think they are Christians or like to be considered Christians, hold a doctrine on the transplantation or transmigration of souls that is more erroneous and repulsive than that of the Gentile philosophers or other false teachers who hold such theories. For the Gentile philosophers and others distinguish between the soul and God, whereas the Manichees say that the soul is nothing else than the substance of God and is simply identified with God Himself. They have no scruple about saying it is subject to changes unworthy of its nature, so that, according to their incredible foolishness, there is no kind of plant or worm with which the soul has not commingled or to which it cannot be transplanted. But let them put out of their minds these subtle questions which they ponder in materialistic patterns of thought, thereby of necessity falling into a morass of false, mischievous, and ludicrous opinions, and let them hold firmly to the fundamental

principle that is by nature clearly implanted in every rational soul beyond all doubt and dispute, namely, that there exists a God who is absolutely immutable and incorruptible. Then there will suddenly be an end to their long fable in its thousand forms, which in their foolish and impious minds they have shamefully fashioned about the mutability of God.

18. The material from which the human soul is made, therefore, is not an irrational soul.

CHAPTER 12 *The human soul was not made of anything corporeal, not even of air or heavenly fire.*

What, then, is the material out of which the soul was made by the breath of God? Was it a body of an earthly and humid nature? By no means! From these elements the flesh was made. For what else is slime than humid earth? And we must not suppose that the soul was made from moisture alone, as if the flesh was from earth and the soul from water. For it is utterly absurd to think that the soul of man was made of material from which the flesh of fish and birds was made.

19. Was the human soul, then, made out of air? For the breath belongs to this element—but our breath, not God's. Hence, I said above that this identification could be considered appropriate if we believed that God was the soul of the world (the world being considered as one large living being), so that He would have breathed the soul forth from the air of His body, just as our soul breathes its breath forth from the air of its body. But since it is clear that God is infinitely above every bodily creature in the world and above every spirit which He created, how can this explanation be seriously proposed? Should we say that the more God is present to the whole of His creation by His unparalleled almighty power, the more He would have been able to make from air the breath which would be the soul of man? But

the soul is not corporeal, and whatever comes from the corporeal elements of the world must necessarily be corporeal. Now, among the elements of the world we must include air; but even if the soul were said to have been made from the element of pure and heavenly fire, we ought not to believe it. There have been philosophers who maintained that all bodies are capable of being transformed into all other bodies. But that any body, earthly or heavenly, is changed into soul and becomes an incorporeal being is not to my knowledge held by anyone and is not part of our faith.

CHAPTER 13 *In the body the elements of fire and air, in addition to earth, are present according to the medical writers.*

20. We should perhaps give some consideration to what the medical writers not only assert but also maintain that they can prove. They say that although all bodies obviously have the solidity proper to the element of earth, nevertheless they have in them also some air, which is in the lungs and is distributed from the heart through the veins, which they call arteries. Furthermore, as these writers have shown, bodies also have the warm quality of fire, which is situated in the liver, and its bright quality, which is made to flow and rise up to the highest place, namely, the brain, which is, as it were, the heaven of the body. From this source come the rays which go forth out of the eyes, and from this center slender ducts go out not only to the eyes but also to the other senses, namely, to the ears, the nose, and the palate, making the sensations of hearing, smelling, and tasting possible. Moreover, they say that the sense of touch, which is all over the body, is directed from the brain also through the medulla of the neck and that of the bones to which the backbone is connected, and that from there tiny channels making sensation possible are spread throughout all parts of the body.

CHAPTER 14 *What the soul perceives by the intellect is far superior to what it perceives by the senses.*

It is by these messengers, therefore, that the soul perceives whatever comes to its notice in the world of bodies. But the soul itself is of a quite different nature, so that when it wishes to understand the divine or God, or simply to understand itself and consider its own virtues, it turns away from this light of the eyes in order to have true and certain knowledge, and recognizing that this light is no help for its purpose, in fact is even something of an obstacle, it raises itself up to the vision of the mind. How could it belong to that lower order of being, since the summit of that order is merely the light that shines from the eyes, which is no help to the soul except for the perception of bodily forms and colors? The soul itself has innumerable objects utterly unlike every kind of body, and it sees these objects only with intellect and reason, a realm beyond the reach of the senses of the body.

CHAPTER 15 *The soul governs the body by means of light and air.*

21. Hence, the human soul is not made of earth or of water or of air or of fire; but it is through the more subtle elements, namely, light and air, that it governs its material and grosser body, that is, moist earth which has been made into flesh. For without the two subtle elements there is no sensation in the body or any spontaneous bodily movement under the direction of the soul. And just as knowing must come before making, so sensing must come before moving. Since the soul, therefore, is incorporeal, it first acts upon a body which is akin to the incorporeal, that is, fire, or rather light and air; then through these it acts upon the grosser elements of the body, such as moisture and earth, which form the solid mass of the body and are more disposed to be acted upon than to act.

CHAPTER 16 *Sensation and spontaneous motion distinguish men and animals from plants and trees.*

22. The statement, Man was made a living being, in my opinion was made precisely because he began to have sensation in his body, a clear sign of animated and living flesh. Trees, indeed, move not only by reason of an external force striking them, as

when they are shaken by the winds, but also through an internal motion by which the growth of a tree according to its kind takes place and by which moisture is drawn into the roots and is changed into that which constitutes a plant or tree. This process never takes place without internal motion. But this motion is not spontaneous as is that which is connected with sensation for the management of the body, as is the case in every kind of animal, which Scripture calls a living being. Even in our own case, unless that first kind of motion were also in us, our bodies would not grow nor would they produce nails or hairs. But if it alone were in us without sensation or spontaneous motion, man would not be said to have been made a living being.

CHAPTER 17 *Why God breathed the breath of life into the face of man.*

23. The front part of the brain, from which all the sensory nerves are spread out, is placed near the brow, and the organs of sensation are in the face, with the exception of the sense of touch, which is diffused throughout the whole body. But even this sense is known to have its path going from the front part of the brain back through the top of the head and then to the neck and the medulla of the spine, as I have already said. Thus, the face along with the rest of the body has the sense of touch, but the senses of sight, hearing, smell, and taste are found only in the face. This, I believe, is why Scripture says that God breathed into man's face the breath of life when he was made a living being. Indeed, the front part of the brain is rightly considered more excellent than the back part: the former leads and the latter follows; and sensation is from the former, whereas motion is from the latter, just as planning precedes an action.

CHAPTER 18 *The three parts of the brain connected with sensation, motion, and memory of motion.*

24. Since there is no bodily motion following sensation without an interval of time, and since we cannot act spontaneously after a lapse of time except with the aid of

memory, the medical writers point out that there are three ventricles in the brain. One of these, which is in the front near the face, is the one from which all sensation comes; the second, which is in the back of the brain near the neck, is the one from which all motion comes; the third, which is between the first two, is where the medical writers place the seat of memory. Since movement follows sensation, a man without this seat of memory would be unable to know what he ought to do if he should forget what he has done. Now, the medical writers say that the existence of these ventricles has been proved by clear indications in cases in which these parts of the brain have been affected by some disease or pathological condition. For when sensation, motion, or memory of motion were impaired, there was a clear indication of the function of each ventricle, and by applying remedies to these different ventricles physicians determined which parts needed healing. The soul, however, acts on these parts of the brain as on its organs. It is not the same thing as they are, but it vivifies and rules all parts, and through them it provides for the body and for this life in virtue of which man was made a living being.

CHAPTER 19 *Bodily disorders which impair the activity of the soul in the body and eventually cause death.*

25. In seeking for the source of the soul, that is, the quasi material out of which God made this breath which is called the soul, no corporeal material should be considered. As God by the excellence of His nature surpasses every creature, so does the soul surpass every corporeal creature. But light and air are bodies of a superior nature in this corporeal world, having a superiority in so far as they are more active than passive as contrasted with water and earth. The soul, therefore, governs the body by means of the two elements that have a kind of resemblance to the spirit. Corporeal light, for example, announces something, and it announces it not to a being that is of the same nature as itself: it makes the announcement to the soul, but the light making the announcement is not soul. And when the soul is

distressed because of a bodily affliction, it is discovered that its activity of ruling the body is impeded by reason of a rupture of the balance in the system, and this affliction is called pain. Moreover, the air which is diffused throughout the nerves obeys the will so as to move the members, but the air itself is not the will.

Furthermore, the central part of the brain signals the motions in the body, which the memory is to retain, but it is not the memory. Finally, when these functions fail completely because of some affliction or disturbance, the messengers of sensation and the agents of motion cease to operate; and the soul, which seems to have no further reason for remaining, departs. But if they do not fail as completely as happens in death, the soul's attention is disturbed and it is like a man who tries unsuccessfully to put back things that keep falling. In this case, from the nature of the disturbance the physicians can know what part of the system is causing the dysfunction, so that, if possible, a remedy may be applied.

CHAPTER 20 *The soul is distinct from the organs of the body.*

26. We must distinguish the soul itself from its corporeal agents, whether vessels or organs or whatever else they may be called. The difference is evident from the fact that the soul is frequently concentrated in thought and turns itself away from everything, so that it is ignorant of many things which are present before the eyes when they are wide open and able to see. And if a person is intensely preoccupied with his thoughts while walking, he will suddenly stop and withdraw the command of the will which had set his feet in motion. On the other hand, if his concentration is not intense enough to bring him to a halt but is sufficient to keep him from attending to the motion of his body as brought to him in a message from the central part of the brain, he sometimes forgets where he came from and where he is going, and without realizing it he passes by the villa for which he was heading, all this time enjoying health of body while his soul is off somewhere else. There are corporeal particles of the corporeal heaven, that is, particles of light and air, which are the first to receive the commands of the soul which vivifies the body

because they are closer to an incorporeal substance than water and earth are. The soul, then, uses these finer elements in administering the mass of the body. Now, it is not clear whether God took the elements of light and air from the heavens which were round the earth and over it and mingled or joined them with the body of the living man, or whether He made them as He did flesh from the slime of the earth; but this question is not relevant to our enquiry. For it is believable that every bodily substance can be changed into every other bodily substance, but to believe that any bodily substance can be changed into soul is absurd.

CHAPTER 21 *The soul is incorporeal.*

27. Therefore, no attention should be paid to the opinion of those who have said that the soul is from a fifth corporeal element, not earth or water or air or fire (whether earthly fire familiar to us, which is always in motion, or heavenly fire, which is pure and bright), but some other kind of being, without any established name, which is a body. If those who follow this opinion agree with us on the definition of a body, namely, any substance occupying space with its length, breadth, and height, the soul is not that and must not be thought to be made of that. For whatever is of that nature, to put the matter briefly, can be divided or circumscribed by lines in any of its parts. But if the soul were capable of this, it could not know of lines that cannot be cut lengthwise, though it realizes full well that such lines cannot be found in the world of bodies.

28. The soul does not think of itself in this manner, for it cannot be ignorant of itself even when it is seeking to know itself. For when it seeks itself, it knows that it seeks itself, a fact it would not know unless it knew itself. For the source in which it seeks itself is itself. When, therefore, it knows itself as seeking, it certainly knows itself. Now, in its entire being it knows all that it knows; and therefore, when it knows itself as seeking, in its entire being it knows itself; and therefore it knows itself entirely. For it is not something else but itself that it knows in its

entire being. Why, then, is it still seeking itself if it knows itself as seeking? For if it did not know itself, it could not know itself as seeking itself. But this applies to the present. What it seeks to know about itself is what it was formerly or what it is going to be. Therefore, it should now cease suspecting that it is a body, because if it were, it would know itself as such, as it knows itself better than it knows heaven and earth, which it knows through the eyes of the body.

29. I pass over that power which the soul obviously possesses in common with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air that make their way back to their stalls or nests, a power of the soul by which images of all corporeal things are received and which itself is not similar in any way to any corporeal substance. Now surely that wherein the likenesses of corporeal beings are contained ought to be like corporeal beings. But if this power of the soul is not corporeal, because it is undeniable that the images of bodies are not only stored there in memory but also are fashioned at will in countless numbers, how much more impossible is it for the soul to be like a body by reason of any other power it possesses?

30. Now, if certain writers say that in another sense everything that exists, namely, every nature and substance, is a body, we should not accept this statement for fear that we may be unable to find any words to distinguish bodies and nonbodies; but at the same time we should not be inordinately anxious about a word. My way of putting it is this: whatever the soul is, it is not one of the four familiar elements, which are obviously bodies; and on the other hand, it is not identified with God. The best words to designate it are "soul" or "life-spirit." I add the word "life" because the air is also usually called "spirit." However, men have called this same air "soul" (anima), so that it is impossible to find a word by which we can precisely distinguish this thing which is not a body, nor God, nor life without sensation (which apparently exists in trees), nor life without a rational mind (such as is found in beasts), but a life now inferior to that of the angels, but destined to

be one with their life if in this world it lives according to the will of its Creator.

31. What, then, is the origin of the soul, that is, from what material was it made (if I may use the expression)? Or from what perfect and blessed substance did it emanate? Or was it simply made from nothing? Although we may have doubts about this problem and continue to search for a solution, there should be absolutely no doubt about the following: if it was something else before it became a soul, whatever it was, it was made by God; and in its present state it has been made by God to be a living soul. For either it was nothing or it was something other than what it now is. But I have given enough attention to this part of our study about what could be called the material from which the soul was made.

CHAPTER 22 *Did God create a causal reason of man's soul on the sixth day?*

32. If the soul was in no sense existing, we must ask how it can be explained that its causal reason was said to have existed in the works which God made on the first six days when He made man to His image. Man's creation according to the image of God, of course, can be rightly understood only in respect of his soul. When we say that, when God created all things simultaneously, He created not the things and substances themselves that were to be, but rather the causal reasons of those things, we must be on our guard lest we seem to be talking nonsense. For what are these causal reasons according to which it could be said that God made in His image the man whose body He had not yet formed from the slime of the earth and into whom He had not yet breathed a soul? And even if the human body had a hidden causal reason by virtue of which it was one day to be formed, there existed the material out of which it would be formed, that is, the earth, in which it is clear that the causal reason lay hidden after the manner of a seed. But what causal reason was originally hidden away in the created world for the soul that was to be made, that is, the breath that was to be made which would be the soul of man,

when God said, Let Us make mankind to Our image and likeness (which cannot be rightly understood except in reference to the soul), if there was no substance in which it could be hidden away?

33. Now if this reason-principle was in God and not in creation, it was not yet created.

How, then, was it said, God made man to His image? But if it was already in creation, that is, in the things which God had made all together, in what creature was it? In a spiritual creature? A corporeal creature? If it was in a spiritual creature, did it act in any way on bodies in the universe, whether heavenly or earthly? Or was it free of any such activity as it existed in that spiritual creature before man was created in his own proper nature, just as in man himself, when he is duly constituted in his own proper life, there is present in a hidden and dormant state the causal principle of generation, which does not operate except through intercourse and conception? And what of that spiritual creature in which this causal reason lay hidden? Was it performing no function of its own? Why, then, had it been created? Was it in order to hold the causal reason of the future human soul or souls, as if they could not exist in themselves but only in some creature living its own life, just as the causal reason of generation cannot exist except in beings already existing and complete? Some spiritual creature, therefore, was made to beget the soul, and in this creature was the causal reason of the future soul. That soul, then, does not come to be until God makes it to be breathed into man. In human procreation it is only God who creates and forms the new life, whether in the seed or in the infant already conceived, through His Wisdom that reaches everywhere because of Its purity, so that nothing defiled gains entrance into It, while It reaches from end to end mightily and governs all graciously. But I have difficulty understanding how for this one purpose some spiritual creature was made which was not mentioned in the works God created on the six days, although God is said to have created man on the sixth day. On that sixth day He did not yet make man in his own proper nature, but (according to our supposition) He made

him in the causal reason placed in that creature which has not been mentioned in Scripture. There was a graver reason why that creature ought to have been mentioned: it was so perfected that it did not have to wait to be made according to its prior causal reason.

CHAPTER 23 *If a causal reason of man's soul was created, where was it stored away? In the angels?*

34. If the day which God first made is rightly understood as spiritual and intellectual being, could it be that, when God made man to His image on the sixth day, He placed in this spiritual and intellectual creation the causal reason of the soul which was to be made later? Thus He would have created in advance the cause and formative principle by which He would make man after the seven days, and this would mean that He created the causal reason of man's body in the earth and the causal reason of his soul in the creation of the first day. But when this is said, what does it mean except that the angelic spiritual creation in a sense begets the human soul if there is pre-existing in that spiritual creation the causal reason of the human soul yet to be created, just as in man there is the causal reason of his future offspring? Human beings, according to this explanation, are parents of human bodies, and angels are parents of human souls, but God is the Creator of both souls and bodies, creating bodies through men, and souls through angels. Or can we say that He created the first body from the earth and the first soul from the angelic nature, after placing the causal reasons there when He originally made man in those beings which He created simultaneously, and that subsequently He created men from men, the body from the body and the soul from the soul? This is a knotty problem, for it is hard to understand how the soul can be the child of an angel or of angels; but it is far more difficult to understand how it could be the child of the corporeal heaven, or, worse yet, of the sea and earth. If it is absurd, therefore, to think that God laid away the causal reason of the soul in the realm of

angelic beings, it would be even more absurd to suppose that the causal reason was previously made in a corporeal creature when God was making man to His image before He formed him in due time from the slime of the earth and breathed life into him.

CHAPTER 24 *The soul of the first man was created in its own proper being on the first day and laid away until God breathed it into the body He formed from the earth.*

35. There is another interpretation which may be the true one, and certainly it seems to me more acceptable to human reason. Let us suppose that in the original works created simultaneously God also created the human soul, which in due time He would breathe into the members of the body formed from the slime of the earth. God had created, of course, the causal reason of the body in the works of the six days, which He created simultaneously, and by that causal reason He made the human body when the time came. Now the expression, in His image, can apply only to the soul, and the expression, male and female, can be properly understood as referring only to the body. If the authority of Scripture, therefore, and the light of reason do not contradict us, let us assume that man was made on the sixth day in the sense that the causal reason of his body was created in the elements of the world, but that his soul in its own proper being was already created with the making of the first day, and that thus created it lay hidden in the works of God until at the proper time He would breathe it into the body He would form from the slime of the earth.

CHAPTER 25 *If the soul was created before entering the body, did it enter the body by its own choice?*

36. At this point we have a question of some importance to consider. If the soul was already created and hidden away, where could it be better off than where it was? What was the reason that a soul living an innocent life should be put into the life of our flesh, in which by sin it would offend Him who created it, with the result

that it would deserve the burden of toil and the penalty of suffering? Should we say that the soul was inclined by its own will to govern a body and that in this life of the body, since it can be lived in a good or evil manner, it would have the object of its choice, the reward for goodness or the punishment for evil? This supposition would not contradict St. Paul's statement in which he says that those not yet born had done no good or evil. The inclination of the will for a body is not a good or evil act for which an account must be rendered before God our Judge, when each one will receive his reward, whether good or bad, according to what he has done in the body. Why, then, can we not go further and suppose that the soul has come to the body by the command of God? Thus, if in the body it should choose to live its life according to God's laws, it would receive the reward of everlasting life in the company of the angels; but if it should despise His laws, it would undergo the punishment it deserved either in long-lasting pain or everlasting fire. Can it be that this theory is not acceptable because obeying the will of God is a good action, and therefore this explanation is contrary to the principle that the unborn have done neither good nor evil?

CHAPTER 26 *If the soul willed to be united with the body, it had no knowledge of the future.*

37. If this is so, we will admit also that the soul was not originally created so as to know its future works whether good or evil. For it is quite unbelievable that it could have tended of its own free will to life in the body if it foreknew that it would commit certain sins by which it would justly incur perpetual punishment. It is surely right in all things to praise the Creator, who made them all very good. And He must not be praised only for those beings to which He gave foreknowledge. He is rightly praised also because He created the beasts; and yet human nature, even in sinners, is superior to the beasts. For it is the nature of man that is from God, not the wickedness in which he implicates himself by an evil use of free will. Nevertheless, if he did not possess free will, he would not have the

same high excellence in nature. For we must think of a man living justly but not having any foreknowledge of future events, and there we must observe how, when he has good will, he is not prevented from leading a life upright and pleasing to God, because in his ignorance of the future he lives by faith. Whoever is unwilling to admit the existence of such a creature in the real world denies the goodness of God. But whoever does not wish such a creature to undergo punishment for his sins is an enemy of justice.

CHAPTER 27 *The soul naturally tends to a body. The spiritual matter of the soul was concreated with its form.*

38. If the soul is made to be sent into a body, we may ask whether it is compelled to go though unwilling. But it is more reasonable to suppose that it has such a will by nature, that is, the nature with which it is created is such that it wishes a body, just as it is natural for us to wish to live, although living an evil life is not prompted by nature but by a perverse will, for which just punishment is given.

39. It is useless, then, for one to ask about the quasi material from which the soul has been made, if we are right in understanding that it was made in those first works when day was made. For just as those creatures which were not existing were made, so the soul was made along with them. But if there was any matter to be formed, either corporeal or spiritual, it was not made by anyone except God, from whom are all things; and it preceded its formation by a priority not of time but of origin, as the sound of a voice precedes a song. What, then, is more reasonable than to assume that the soul was made of spiritual matter?

CHAPTER 28 *Summary of problems regarding creation. How God has both finished and begun His works. Summary of what is certain and uncertain about the soul.*

40. If anyone is unwilling to concede that the soul was made before it was breathed into the formed body of man, let him consider what his reply will be when he is asked what it is made from. On the one hand, he may say that God did make or does make something out of nothing after finishing the works of His creation. He then must see how he will explain the fact that man was made on the sixth day to the image of God, which cannot be rightly understood except in reference to the soul, and he must decide in what being God made the causal reason of the soul not yet existing. On the other hand, he may say that the soul was made not from nothing but from some being already existing. He will be hard pressed to find out what that being is, whether corporeal or spiritual, and to answer the questions I have proposed above. It will still be a problem to decide in what one of the created substances originally made in the six days God made the causal reason of the soul which He had not yet made either from nothing or from something.

41. If my critic wishes to avoid these difficulties by saying that man was made from the slime of the earth on the sixth day but that this fact is stated later simply as a recapitulation, he must consider what he will say about the woman, since Scripture says, Male and female He made them, and He blessed them. And if he replies that she also was made on the sixth day from the rib of man, he must decide in what sense he can assert that on the sixth day the birds were made which were brought to Adam, for Scripture declares that every kind of bird was created from the waters on the fifth day. And he must also explain how the trees planted in Paradise can be said to have been made on the sixth day, for Scripture has assigned the creation of trees to the third day. Let him also ponder the meaning of the words, And again from the earth He made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. He surely cannot say that what the earth put forth on the third day was not pleasant to the sight and good for food, for it was among the works which God made, and all were very good. He must also explain the meaning of the words, Again God formed from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of

heaven, as if these had not all been made at the beginning, or rather as if none of these had been made before. For Scripture does not say, "And again God formed from the earth the other beasts of the field and the other birds of heaven," as if these were the ones that the earth did not produce on the sixth day or the water on the fifth. But Scripture plainly says, all the beasts and all the birds. He must also give thought to how God made all things in six days: on the first day, day itself; on the second, the firmament; on the third, sea and earth, and from earth, plants and trees; on the fourth, the lights of heaven and the stars; on the fifth, the living beings of the waters; on the sixth, the living beings of the earth. And then he must explain the words, When day was made, God made heaven and earth and every green thing of the field, for when day was made, He made only day itself.

Moreover, how did God make every green thing of the field before it appeared above the earth and all the grass before it sprang forth? For who would not say that it was made when it sprang forth, not before it sprang forth, unless the words of Scripture instructed him otherwise? Let him remember also that Scripture says: He who lives forever created all things together. And let him see how all things can be said to have been created together if their creation is separated by intervals not of hours only but even of days. He should take care also to show how these two statements, seemingly contradictory, can both be true: first, that on the seventh day God rested from all His works, which the Book of Genesis says; and second, that He works even until now, as our Lord says. He should also explain how things said to be finished are also said to have been begun.

42. Because of all these testimonies of Sacred Scripture, of which no one doubts the truth except an infidel or a scoffer, I have been led to hold that God first created all things simultaneously at the beginning of the ages, creating some in their own substances and others in pre-existing causes. Hence, the all-powerful God has made not only what is existing at the present but also what is to be, and from the making of these creatures He has rested in order to create subsequently, by

administering and ruling these things, the order of time and of temporal things. Thus, He had finished His works in the sense that He had set limits for the kinds of creatures, and He had begun them inasmuch as they must reproduce themselves throughout the ages. In view of the works finished, then, He rests, and in view of the works begun He is working even until now. But if someone can find a better interpretation of these texts, I will not resist him, I will even support him.

43. With regard to the soul, which God breathed into the face of man, I have no firm position except to say that it is from God in such a way that it is not the substance of God; that it is incorporeal, that is, not a body but a spirit; that it is not born of God's substance and does not proceed from God's substance, but is made by God; that it is not made by the conversion of a body or an irrational soul into it; and hence it is made from nothing. And I hold that it is immortal in view of the nature of the life that it has, which it cannot possibly lose; but that in view of a kind of mutability that it has, making it possible to change for the better or the worse, it can be rightly considered also as mortal, for only He has true immortality of whom it has been justly said, who alone has immortality. The other interpretations that I have put forth in this book should be of some interest to the reader: either he may discover from them how one must investigate without rash assertions the questions which Scripture does not clearly answer; or if my way of investigation is not to his liking, he may see how I carried it on, and as a result I hope that if he can instruct me he will not refuse, and that if he cannot he will join me in searching for someone from whom both of us may learn.

BOOK EIGHT

PARADISE AND THE COMMAND GIVEN TO ADAM

CHAPTER 1

Different ways of interpreting Paradise. The account in Genesis is written in the style of history, not in that of allegory.

1. And God planted a garden in Eden in the East, and there He put the man whom He formed. I am aware that many authors have written at great length on Paradise, but their theories on the subject in general can be reduced to three. There is, first, the opinion of those who interpret the word "paradise" in an exclusively corporeal sense. Then there are those who prefer to give an exclusively spiritual meaning to the word. Finally, there are those who accept the word "paradise" in both senses, sometimes corporeally and at other times spiritually. Briefly, then, I admit that the third interpretation appeals to me. According to it I have now undertaken to treat of Paradise, if God will make this possible. Man was made from the slime of the earth—and that certainly means a human body—and was placed in a corporeal paradise. Adam, of course, signifies something else where St. Paul speaks of him as a type of the One who was to come. But he is understood here as a man constituted in his own proper nature, who lived a certain number of years, was the father of numerous children, and died as other men die, although he was not born of parents as other men are but made from the earth, as was proper for the first man. Consequently, Paradise, in which God placed him, should be understood as simply a place, that is, a land, where an earthly man would live.
2. The narrative in these books is not written in a literary style proper to allegory, as in the Cantic of Canticles, but from beginning to end in a style proper to history, as in the Books of Kings and the other works of that type. But since those

historical books contain matters familiar to us from common human experience, they are easily and readily taken in a literal sense at the first reading, so that the meaning of the historical events in relation to the future may also be subsequently drawn from them. But in Genesis, since there are matters beyond the ken of readers who focus their gaze on the familiar course of nature, they are unwilling to have these matters taken in the literal sense but prefer to understand them in a figurative sense. Accordingly, they assume that history, that is, the literal narrative of events that happened, begins at the point where Adam and Eve, dismissed from Paradise, were joined in sexual union and begot children. Do they think that all the subsequent events of the narrative are parallel to our human experience, such as the great number of years that Adam and Eve lived, the translation of Enoch, conception in the case of an old and sterile woman, and so forth?

3. But there is a difference, they say, between a narration of wondrous deeds and a narration of the making of creatures. In the former case the very unfamiliar character of the deeds points to a distinction between the ordinary works of nature and miracles or marvels, as they are called, whereas in the latter case the creation of natures is presented. In answer to this, I say that the creation of natures narrated here is something unfamiliar, because it is the creation of things for the first time. For what is so unique and unparalleled in the constitution of the things of the world as the world itself? Surely we are not to believe that God did not make the world because He does not make worlds today, or that He did not make the sun because He does not make suns today. And this response should be given not just to those who question the creation of Paradise but also to those who question the creation of man. But now, since they believe that the first man was made by God as no other has been made, why are they unwilling to believe that Paradise was made just as they now see forests are made?

4. I am speaking, of course, to those who accept the authority of Scripture; for some of them want Paradise to be understood not in the literal sense but figuratively. Elsewhere I have dealt in a different manner with those who are determined adversaries of the Book of Genesis. Nevertheless, even in that work of mine I defended, as well as I was able, the literal meaning of the narrative. As a result, those who are moved by irrational motives, being obstinate or dull, may refuse to believe what Genesis says but cannot find any basis for proving it false. On the other hand, some of our writers, who have faith in the inspired books of Scripture, are unwilling to accept Paradise in the literal sense, that is, a delightful place shaded with fruitbearing trees, spacious, and irrigated by an abundant source of water. Since they see that its extensive green fields, without any work of man, are flourishing by the hidden work of God, they reject the literal meaning of this account. But I wonder how they believe that man himself was made in a manner completely beyond their experience. If he is to be understood in a figurative sense, who begot Cain, Abel, and Seth? Did they exist only figuratively, and were they not men born of men? Let them, therefore, examine the matter more closely to see where their presupposition leads, and let them try with us first to take in the proper sense all the events narrated. For who would not later applaud them when they understand what these events also point to in the figurative sense as signs of spiritual realities or affections or even future events? Of course, if it became utterly impossible to safeguard the truth of the faith while accepting in a material sense what is named as material in Genesis, what alternative would be left for us except to take these statements in a figurative sense rather than to be guilty of an impious attack on Sacred Scripture? But if accepting these statements in a material sense not only does not impede the understanding of the narrative of the inspired word but actually helps it, there will be no one, I think, so headstrong in disbelief as to see the proper sense to be in agreement with the rule of faith and yet to prefer to remain in his original position, insisting that it can be taken only in the

figurative sense.

CHAPTER 2

In my book on Genesis against the Manicheans I frequently explained the text in the figurative meaning. I now believe that the literal meaning must be sought.

5. Shortly after my conversion I wrote two books against the Manicheans, who are in error not because they are mistaken in their interpretation of the Old Testament but because they completely reject it with impious scorn. I wanted without delay either to refute their aberrations or to direct them to seek in the books which they hated the faith taught by Christ and the Gospels. At that time I did not see how all of Genesis could be taken in the proper sense, and it seemed to me more and more impossible, or at least scarcely possible or very difficult, for all of it to be so understood. But not willing to be deterred from my purpose, whenever I was unable to discover the literal meaning of a passage, I explained its figurative meaning as briefly and as clearly as I was able, so that the Manichees might not be discouraged by the length of the work or the obscurity of its contents and thus put the book aside. I was mindful, however, of the purpose which I had set before me and which I was unable to achieve, that is, to show how everything in Genesis is to be understood first of all not in the figurative but in the proper sense; and since I did not completely despair of the possibility of understanding it all in this sense, I made the following statement in the first part of Book Two: If anyone wishes to interpret in a literal sense everything written in this book, that is, to understand it only according to the letter of the text, and if in doing this he avoids blasphemy and explains everything in agreement with the Catholic faith, not only is he not to be discouraged, but he should be considered an outstanding interpreter worthy of great praise. But if there is no way of understanding a passage in a devout sense worthy of God without assuming that it has been set forth in figures and enigmas,

we should remember that we have the authority of the apostles, who solved so many enigmas in the books of the Old Testament, and we should stay with the kind of interpretation which we have adopted with the help of Him who bids us ask, seek, and knock. Thus, our purpose should be to explain all these figures of things according to the Catholic faith, whether the matter belongs to history or prophecy, without prejudice to a better and more exact treatment which we or others, whom the Lord is pleased to enlighten, may subsequently undertake. This is what I said then. And now the Lord has wished that I should look at and consider the same matter more thoroughly, and I believe that according to His will I can reasonably hope that I shall be able to show how the Book of Genesis has been written with a proper rather than an allegorical meaning in view. With this in mind, let us examine the account of Paradise which follows, using the method with which we succeeded in explaining what went before.

CHAPTER 3

On the third day God had created in their causal reasons the plants and trees of Paradise.

6. God, therefore, planted a garden in a delightful place (this is the meaning of in Eden in the East, and there He put the man whom He had formed. Thus it is stated in Scripture because thus it was done. Then Scripture recapitulates in order to show how God did what has been mentioned very briefly, that is, how He planted Paradise and put there the man whom He had formed. For Scripture goes on to say, *And again from the earth God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.* Scripture does not say, "God made to grow from the earth another tree" or "the rest of the trees," but, *Again from the earth He made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.* The earth had already produced on the third day every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food. For on the sixth day God had said, *See, I have given you every seed-bearing plant*

bearing its seed over all the earth, and every fruit tree that has seed-bearing fruit. These will be food for you. Can it be that first God gave one tree and now He wished to give another? I do not think so. But since the trees planted in Paradise are of the kinds which earth had already produced on the third day, it again produced them in its own time. For when Scripture says that on the third day earth produced these trees, this was done in causes in the earth, that is, earth in the hidden recesses of its being had then received the power of producing them, and by this power even now earth puts forth similar trees to be seen in their own time.

7. The words, therefore, which God spoke on the sixth day, *See, I have given you every seed-bearing plant bearing its seed over all the earth* and so forth, were not spoken by the sound of a voice uttered in time but by the creative power, which is God's Word. But it is only by sounds uttered in time that man can be told what God spoke without sounds measured by time. For the man formed from the slime of the earth and made a living being by the breath of God and all the members of the human race descended from him were destined to eat the fruit of these plants and trees which would spring forth over the earth from the productive power that earth had already received. God, therefore, stored away in creatures the causal reasons of the plants and trees that were to be, and, as if these plants and trees already existed, He spoke in that interior and transcendent truth which eye has not seen nor ear heard, but which the Holy Spirit certainly has revealed to the writer.

CHAPTER 4

The literal and the figurative meanings in Scripture texts. The meaning of Genesis 2:9.

8. Serious consideration must be given to the words that follow: ... *the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.* We should take care not to be compelled to turn to allegory and end up with these not

being trees at all but something else signified by the name of tree. For it is said of wisdom, *She is a tree of life to all those who lay hold of her*. Nevertheless, although there is the eternal Jerusalem in heaven, a city has been built on earth by which the heavenly Jerusalem is signified. Moreover, Sarah and Hagar signify the two testaments, yet they were two women who actually existed. Finally, although Christ through the suffering on the wood of the cross bathes us with spiritual water, nevertheless He was also the rock which when struck by wood poured forth water for the thirsting people, concerning which it is said, *And the Rock was Christ*. All these events signified something other than what they were, but none the less they themselves existed in the world of material reality. And when they were narrated by the sacred historian, they were not set forth in figurative language, but rather in a narrative of events that prefigured what was to come. Hence, there was a tree of life no less than the Rock which was Christ, and God did not want man to live in Paradise without the mysteries of spiritual things made present in material things. Man, then, had food in the other trees, but in the tree of life there was a sacrament. And what did it signify except wisdom, of which it was said, *She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her*, just as it was said of Christ that He is a Rock pouring forth water to all who thirst for Him? He is rightly called by the name of that which signified Him before His coming. He is the Lamb immolated on the Passover; nevertheless, that immolation was represented not just by words but also by a real act. For one cannot say that that lamb was not a lamb; it was truly a lamb, and it was slain, and it was eaten. And although this was something that really happened, something else was prefigured by it. This event was different from that of the fatted calf which was killed for the feast in honor of the younger son on his return home. In the latter case the narrative itself is a narrative of figures or types; it is not a matter of a figurative meaning of events that really happened. The narrator was not the Evangelist but the Lord Himself, although the Evangelist did state that the Lord told the parable. Thus, what the Evangelist told did happen: the Lord did speak these words. But the narration told

by our Lord was a parable, and in this kind of narrative one is never expected to demonstrate that events told in the story literally happened. Christ is the Stone anointed by Jacob, and the Stone rejected by the builders, which has become the head of the corner. But in the first case, there is reference to an event that really happened, whereas in the second case, an event is foretold in figurative language. The former was an account of a past event written by a historian, but the latter was a proclamation by a prophet who was foretelling only events to come.

CHAPTER 5

The tree of life had a special nourishing power and a symbolic meaning.

9. Thus Wisdom, namely, Christ Himself, is the tree of life in the spiritual paradise to which He sent the thief from the cross. But a tree of life which would signify Wisdom was also created in the earthly paradise. This is the meaning of Scripture, which in narrating the historical events that happened has told how man was made in the body and how living in the body he was placed in the earthly paradise. Now if anyone thinks that souls on leaving the body are confined within visible corporeal places, though they are themselves without bodies, he may defend his opinion. There will be those who will support this position and even go so far as to hold that the rich man tormented by thirst was surely in a corporeal place, and they will not hesitate to declare that his soul was obviously corporeal in view of his parched tongue and the drop of water he craved from the finger of Lazarus. For my part, I have no desire to rush into controversy with them on a question so perplexing; it is better to doubt about the mysterious than to dispute about the uncertain. I have no doubt that the rich man is to be understood as being in the burning heat of punishment and the poor man in the cool refreshment of joy. But how we must interpret the flame of hell, the bosom of Abraham, the tongue of the rich man, the finger of the poor man, the excruciating thirst, the refreshing drop of water, may possibly be discovered with considerable effort by those who humbly

seek, whereas it will never be found by those who engage in acrimonious debate. I must, then, immediately give my answer to the question we are considering, so that I may not be delayed by a problem which is profound and in need of lengthy discussions. If souls are contained in corporeal places even after they have left the body, the thief on the cross could have been brought to that paradise where the first man had been placed in the body. Having said this, I may add that with the help of a more appropriate passage in Scripture, if the need arises, we may hope somehow to determine what we should seek or what we should think in this matter.

10. But I have no doubt, and I do not think anyone else has doubts, that Wisdom is not a body and therefore not a tree. It was possible, however, that through a tree, that is, through a corporeal creature used as a sacrament, Wisdom could be signified in the earthly Paradise. But this interpretation is not accepted by the reader who does not see in Scripture the many material sacraments of spiritual things, or maintains that the first man could not have been able to rule his life according to such a sacrament. Yet St. Paul speaks of this sort of sight when he says of the woman whom we believe to have been made from a rib of the man, *For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will cleave to his wife; and they will be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament in Christ and in the Church.* It is strange and hardly tolerable to observe how men want to take "Paradise" as figuratively spoken and yet do not want the physical reality to have a figurative meaning. But if in the case of narratives such as those about Hagar and Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac they admit that there is both historical fact and symbolic meaning, I fail to see why they do not grant that the tree of life both existed as a real material tree and at the same time symbolized Wisdom.

11. It should be noted, moreover, that the fruit of the tree of life was material food, and yet it had the power to give lasting health and vigor to man's body, not in the

manner of other foods but by a mysterious communication of vitality. In the case of bread on another occasion, although it was ordinary bread, it had something more in it; and by one piece of it God kept a man from hunger for a period of forty days. Shall we hesitate to believe that by the fruit of a tree, in view of its higher meaning, God gave to man protection against physical deterioration through sickness or age and against death itself? For we know that in another instance God gave to the food of man a property so marvelous that meal and oil in earthen vessels restored his failing strength and yet itself did not fail. Let our adversary step forward and say that it was fitting for God to have worked miracles like this in our land but not in Paradise. But surely He worked a greater miracle in Paradise when He made man from the dust and woman from the rib of man than He worked in our land when He raised the dead to life.

CHAPTER 6

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9).

12. We must now consider the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree was certainly visible and corporeal, as the other trees were. That it was a tree, therefore, there is no doubt; but what we must seek is the reason for its name. For my part, after diligent study of that problem, I am strongly attracted to the opinion of those who say that the tree did not produce harmful fruit (for He who had made all things very good had planted nothing evil in Paradise), but the evil for man was his transgression of God's command. It was proper that man, placed in a state of dependence upon the Lord God, should be given some prohibition, so that obedience would be the virtue by which he would please his Lord. I can truthfully say that this is the only virtue of every rational creature who lives his life under God's rule, and that the fundamental and greatest vice is the overweening pride by which one wishes to have independence to his own ruin, and the name of this vice

is disobedience. There would not, therefore, be any way for a man to realize and feel that he was subject to the Lord unless he was given some command. The tree, then, was not evil, but it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because, on the supposition that man would eat of its fruit after the prohibition, there was within it the future violation of the command, and because of this transgression man would learn by undergoing punishment the difference between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. Scripture, therefore, has not spoken figuratively about this tree: we must understand that it has described a real tree. And this tree was named not from the apples or fruit that grew on it but from what had followed after it had been touched against God's command.

CHAPTER 7

The four rivers of Paradise. The literal meaning (Gen. 2:10–14).

13. *And a river which watered Paradise went out of Eden, and from there it was divided into four parts. The name of the one is Phison; this is the one that flows around all the land of Evilat, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good, and carbuncle and emerald are found there. And the name of the second river is Geon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Tigris, which flows by the land of the Assyrians. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.* In discussing these rivers, need I make any further effort to establish the fact that they are true rivers, not just figurative expressions without a corresponding reality in the literal sense, as if the names would signify something else and not rivers at all, in spite of the fact that they are well known in the lands through which they flow and are spoken of in nearly all the world? As a matter of fact, it is evident that the four rivers are precisely those named. In the case of two of them, their names were changed in ancient times, as happened also to the Tiber, which was once called the Albula. The Geon is the river which is now called the Nile, and Phison was once the name of the river which they call the

Ganges today. The other two, the Tigris and the Euphrates, have kept their ancient names. These facts should persuade us to take the first meaning of the other details of this narrative in the literal sense and not to assume that the account is allegorical, but that the facts narrated really exist and that they also have some figurative meaning. This is not to say that a parable cannot take a detail from reality although the parable itself is obviously not intended to describe reality in the literal sense. An example is the parable told by our Lord about the man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers. One senses and clearly sees that this is a parable and that the whole account is figurative. Nevertheless, the two cities named in the parable are found even today existing in the same places. We would take the four rivers also in this way if we were under any compulsion to interpret the other details of the narrative about Paradise not literally but figuratively. But no good reason prohibits us from understanding things first in the literal sense. We can, therefore, follow with simplicity the authority of Scripture in the narration of these historical realities, taking them first as true historical realities and then searching for any further meaning they may have.

14. Are we hesitant to admit this because it is said that the source of some of these rivers is known and of others is completely unknown, and therefore we cannot take the account literally since the four rivers in Genesis flow from the one river of Paradise? But as we have no knowledge at all about the location of Paradise, we should rather assume that the river there is divided into four rivers, precisely as Scripture says, and that those rivers whose sources are said to be known have flowed somewhere under the earth and after flowing a great distance have sprung forth in other places which have been designated as their sources. For it is common knowledge that this sort of thing happens in the case of certain rivers, although it is known to us only when the underground courses are short. A river, therefore, went out from Eden, that is, from the delightful place, and it watered

Paradise, that is, all the beautiful and fruit-bearing trees which shaded all the land of that region.

CHAPTER 8

Why God wished man to cultivate the soil in Paradise (Gen. 2:15).

15. *And the Lord God took the man whom He made and placed him in Paradise to cultivate and guard it. And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, "You may eat of every tree that is in Paradise, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. In the day that you eat of it you shall die."* Having previously stated briefly that God had planted Paradise and placed there the man whom He had formed, the sacred writer repeats this in order to tell how Paradise was established. Now, therefore, in his repetition he also has recounted under what conditions God had placed there the man whom He made. Let us, then, look into the meaning of the expression "to cultivate and guard." What was the man to cultivate and guard? Did the Lord wish that the first man should work at tilling the soil? Surely he was not condemned to labor before he sinned. This is what we should think, did we not see certain men cultivating the land with such pleasure that it is a severe punishment for them to be called away from it to something else. Whatever delight there is, therefore, in the cultivation of the land was present then much more intensely when neither soil nor weather presented any obstacle. For there was no painful effort but only pleasure and enthusiasm when the gifts of God's creation came forth in a joyful and abundant harvest with the help of man's effort. Thus greater praise was given to the Creator Himself, who had imparted to the soul of man placed in a living body the art and ability to carry out his work in accordance with what he freely wished and not in accordance with what bodily needs might force upon him against his will.

16. What more impressive and wonderful spectacle than this? Where is human reason better able to speak, as it were, to nature than when man sows the seed, plants a tree, transplants a bush, grafts a mallet-shoot, and thus asks, as it were, each root and seed what it can or cannot do, why it can or cannot do it, what is the extent of the intrinsic and invisible power of numbers within it, and what can be attributed to the extrinsic factors applied by human effort? And how can man better understand, than he does in reflecting on these wonders, that *Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who gives the growth?* For even that part of the work of production which comes from outside comes from a man whom God has also created and whom He invisibly rules and governs.

CHAPTER 9

How man in Paradise willingly and joyfully cultivated the soil.

17. Now, at this point the mind lifts up its gaze to consider the whole world like a great tree of creation. In it is found a double activity of Providence, the natural and the voluntary. The natural working of Providence can be seen in God's hidden governance of the world, by which He gives growth to trees and plants; the voluntary working of His providence can be observed in the deeds of angels and men. In the natural working of Providence the heavenly bodies above and earthly bodies below follow an established order: the stars and other heavenly bodies shine, night follows day and day follows night, earth firmly established is washed and encircled by waters, air moves above it all around, trees and animals are generated and born, develop, grow old, and die; and so it is with everything else in nature that comes about by an interior, natural movement. Of the voluntary working of Providence there are other signs: creatures are instructed and learn, fields are cultivated, societies are governed, the arts are practiced, and other activities go on both in the heavenly society and in this mortal society on earth;

and the good are provided for even with the help of the wicked, though all unwittingly. In man himself the same twofold power of Providence is at work: first, there is the natural work of Providence in respect to the body, that is, in the movement by which it comes into being, develops, and grows old; and then there is the voluntary working of Providence in so far as provision is made for his food, his clothing, and his well-being. So, too, in the case of the soul: by nature it is provided that it lives and has sensation; by voluntary action it is provided that it acquires knowledge and lives in harmony.

18. In the case of a tree, the art of the husbandman works exteriorly to assist its internal development. Similarly in the case of man, in so far as his body is concerned, medicine is an external help for the intrinsic natural forces; and in so far as his soul is concerned, instruction coming from an external source contributes to the interior happiness of nature. What negligence is in cultivating a tree, that unconcern about healing is in respect of the body, and indifference about learning is in relation to the soul. A superfluity of water for a tree is like harmful food for a body or an inducement to evil for the soul. Over all things, therefore, is God, who established all things and rules all things, who in His goodness created all substances and in His justice guides all wills. Why, then, do we depart from the truth if we assume that man was placed in Paradise with the understanding that he would till the land not in servile labor but with a spiritual pleasure befitting his dignity? What is more innocent than this work for those who are at leisure, and what more provocative of profound reflection for those who are wise?

CHAPTER 10

The meaning of "cultivate" and "guard" in Gen. 2:15.

19. Man was to guard it. But guard what? Paradise? Against whom? There was surely no fear of an invader from the vicinity, or of one who would assail the borders; no fear of a thief or an aggressor. How, then, are we to understand that a corporeal paradise could have been guarded by man with corporeal means? But Scripture did not say "to cultivate and guard Paradise"; it said simply to cultivate and guard. But if we take care to translate literally from the Greek, the text says, *And the Lord God took the man whom He made and placed him in Paradise to cultivate and guard it (or him)*. But did God place the man there to work? This is the interpretation of the translator who wrote simply "to cultivate" or "to work" (ut operaretur), without an object expressed. Or was it to cultivate Paradise, that is, that the man should cultivate Paradise? The text is ambiguous. But the words seem to demand that we say not "to cultivate Paradise" (operaretur paradisum) but rather "to work in Paradise" (operaretur in paradiso).

20. Nevertheless, let us assume that we do not take the words "to cultivate Paradise" in the sense in which we took the previous statement, *And there was not a man to cultivate the earth* (while admitting, of course, that the expression "to cultivate the earth" has exactly the same structure as "to cultivate Paradise"). The text is ambiguous, and we should explore both interpretations. For if it is not necessary to say "to guard Paradise" (paradisum custodire), but if we can say "to keep guard in Paradise" (in paradiso custodire), then what is being guarded in Paradise? As for the expression "to work in Paradise," we have already discussed our opinion. Perhaps we should say that what man cultivated in the earth by the art of agriculture he guarded or preserved within himself by discipline. I mean that just as the soil which he tilled obeyed him, so he would dutifully render to his Lord, who had given him the command, the fruit of obedience, not the thorns of disobedience. In the end, since he did not wish to remain obedient and guard within himself the likeness of the Paradise which he cultivated, he was condemned and received a field like himself, for God said, *Thorns and thistles it shall bring*

forth to you.

21. But if we understand the expression as meaning "to cultivate Paradise" and "to guard Paradise," man could indeed cultivate Paradise, as explained above, by the art of agriculture; he could not guard it, however, against evil or hostile men because there were none, but perhaps against beasts. But how would this be? And why? Beasts were surely not a threat to man until he had sinned. For it is later said that when the beasts were brought to him, he gave names to them all. Moreover, on the sixth day, by the law of God's word, he received food in common with all the beasts. And if there was already something to fear in the beasts, how could one man protect this Paradise? For it was no small place that was watered by such a mighty river. And he would have to guard it if he were able to fortify it on all sides with a wall of such a nature and such a size that a serpent would not be able to make its way in. But it would be an incredible feat if he could have kept all the serpents out before he had fortified the garden on all sides.

22. Hence, why do we pass over the interpretation that is right before our eyes? Man was indeed placed in Paradise to cultivate it by the art of agriculture, as I have argued above. The exercise of this art did not involve wearisome toil but was filled with delights, suggesting noble and salutary thoughts to the mind of a wise man. And he was placed there to guard this same Paradise for himself, so as not to commit any deed by which he would deserve to be expelled from it. Finally, he was also given a command by observing which he would guard Paradise for himself in the sense that if he obeyed it he would not be driven forth from the garden. For a person is rightly said to have failed to guard his possessions if he has acted in such a way as to lose them, even if they are preserved intact for another who has found them or has deserved to receive them.

23. There is another possible meaning for these words, and I think there is good reason for preferring it: that is, God was to cultivate man and guard him. For just as man cultivates the earth not to make it earth but to develop it and make it fruitful, so God in a much deeper sense cultivates man, whom He has created and made man, so that he may be made just if he does not turn away from his Creator by pride. For this is to apostatize from God, which Scripture calls the beginning of pride: *The beginning of man's pride is to depart from the Lord*. God is the immutable Good, whereas man in both soul and body is a mutable being. Therefore, unless man turns towards the immutable Good, which is God, and stands firm in Him, he cannot be formed so as to be just and happy. Therefore, the same God who creates man and makes him man also cultivates man and guards him so that he may be good and happy. Hence, in the very statement wherein man is said to cultivate the earth (which was already earth) so that it may be adorned and fruitful, there also God is said to cultivate man (who was already man) so that he may be devout and wise, and to guard him, because when he takes more delight in the power he has in himself than in that of God, who is above him, and when he condemns the authority of God, man cannot be safe.

CHAPTER 11

The author of Genesis teaches us that God is our true Lord (Gen. 2:15).

24. Here we should observe a fact which I think has a lesson for us and calls our attention to something important. From the opening line of this sacred book, starting with the words, *In the beginning God created heaven and earth*, all the way to this point in the narrative, the expression "Lord God" is never used but only "God." But now, when God placed the man in Paradise in order to cultivate and guard him by His guidance, Scripture says, *And the Lord God took the man whom He made and placed him in Paradise to cultivate and guard him*. The author

is not implying that God is not Lord of the creatures mentioned above. But this account was written for man, not for the angels or other creatures, and it was to remind him how important it is for him to recognize God as his Lord, that is, to be obedient under His rule rather than to live uncontrolled and abuse his freedom. Hence, the author did not want to put this expression earlier but rather to save it for that part of the narrative where God would put man in Paradise to cultivate and to guard him. Thus he did not say, as in all the preceding instances, "And God took the man whom He made," but rather he said, *And the Lord God took the man whom He made and placed him in Paradise* in order to cultivate him so that he would be just and guard him so that he would be safe, doing this by His rule, which is useful not for Him but for us. For God does not need our service, but we need His rule so that He may cultivate and guard us. Accordingly, He alone is the true Lord, because we serve Him not for His advantage and welfare but for ours. For if He needed us, by that very fact He would not be our true Lord, since through our efforts He would be helped in His need, and being subject to that need He Himself would be in servitude. With good reason the Psalmist sang: *I said to the Lord, "Thou art my God, for Thou hast no need of my goods."* And what I said about our serving Him for our advantage and welfare should not be taken to mean that we expect something from Him other than Himself, who is our supreme advantage and welfare. Thus, our love for Him is freely given according to the Psalmist: *But it is good for me to adhere to God.*

CHAPTER 12

God works in man by His grace.

25. Man is not so constituted that he would be able, when once created, to perform any good deed by his own powers if his Creator abandoned him. All his good action consists in his being turned to Him by whom he has been made, and in his becoming, by his Creator's power, just, faithful, wise, and blessed always. He does

not acquire these qualities and then depart, as is the case when a sick person is healed by a medical doctor and then goes his way. For the physician who healed the body worked as an outside agent assisting nature, which was working internally under God, who is the cause of all health by that double operation of His providence about which I have spoken above. Man, therefore, must not turn to God in such a way that once being made just by Him he may depart, but rather that he may always be receiving justification from his Creator. When man does not depart from God, by this very fact, since God is present to him, he is justified, illuminated, and made happy, and God is cultivating and guarding him while he is obedient and subject to God's commands.

26. When man cultivates the earth so that the land is developed and made fertile, having done his work he departs, leaving the field ploughed or sown or irrigated or in whatever condition his work has placed it, and the work done remains when the worker is gone. But, as I have said, it is different when God cultivates a just man. He does not justify him in such a way that if the man should turn away, the work which God wrought would remain in him when he is gone. A better example is that of air when light is present: the air has not been given its own luminosity, but it becomes luminous, for if it had been given its own luminosity and was not constantly receiving it, it would remain luminous when the light was gone. In a similar way, man is illuminated when God is present to him, but when God is absent, darkness is immediately upon him; and he is separated from God not by a distance in space but by a turning away of his will.

27. May God, then, who is immutably good, cultivate the good man and guard him. By Him we must be unceasingly made and unceasingly perfected, clinging to Him and remaining turned to Him of whom it is said, *But it is good for me to adhere to God*, and to whom it is said, *I will keep my strength turned towards Thee*. For we are His work of art not only in so far as we are human beings but also in so far as

we are good. When St. Paul spoke to the faithful, who had been converted from a life of sin, about the grace by which we have been saved, he said: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your doing, but it is God's gift; it is not because of your works, so that no one may glory. For we are His work of art created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God has prepared, that we should walk in them.* Elsewhere Paul says, *With fear and trembling work out your own salvation.* But then, lest they think this could be attributed to themselves, as if they would make themselves just and good, he immediately added, *For it is God who works in you.* Therefore, *The Lord God took the man whom He made and placed him in Paradise to cultivate him (that is, to work in him) and to guard him.*

CHAPTER 13

Why man was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16–17).

28. *And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, "You may eat of every tree that is in Paradise, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. In the day that you eat of it you shall die."* If this tree from which man was forbidden by God to eat were an evil thing, it would seem that it was from the very nature of this evil thing that he received a deadly poison. But all the trees in Paradise were good, having been planted by God, who made all things very good, and there was no evil substance there because there is no evil substance anywhere (a point I shall discuss at greater length, God willing, when I take up the question of the serpent). The man, therefore, was forbidden to touch that tree, which was not evil, so that the observance of the command in itself would be a good for him and its violation an evil.

29. There could not have been any more apt or cogent way of teaching that disobedience alone is a great evil, when man was found guilty of iniquity because

he touched a thing against a prohibition, although if he had not been prohibited and had touched it he certainly would not have sinned. For when some one says, for example, "Do not touch this plant," if it is poisonous and means death for the one who touches it, death will surely come to a man who defies the command. But even if there had been no such prohibition and yet he had touched it, none the less he would surely die. For the plant would be a threat to his health and to his life whether it was forbidden to him or not. On the other hand, when someone forbids the touching of a thing against the interests not of him who touches but of him who forbids—as would be the case when a man puts his hand into another's money though forbidden by the owner to do so—the action of him who was prohibited would be a sin precisely because it could have done injury to the one who prohibited it. But when a thing is touched which would not harm him who touched it unless it were forbidden, nor anyone else no matter how often he touched it, why was it forbidden except to show the good of obedience in itself and the evil of disobedience in itself?

30. Finally, nothing else is sought by the sinner except to be free of the sovereignty of God when he does a deed that is sinful only in so far as God forbids it. If this alone were attended to, what else but the will of God would be attended to? What else but the will of God would be loved? What else but the will of God would be preferred to man's will? Leave the reason for the command in the Lord's hands. He who is His servant must do His bidding, and then perhaps by the merit of his obedience he will have grounds for seeing the reason of God's command. But we need not prolong our enquiry into the reason for this command. If the service of God is a great good for man, God by His command makes useful whatever He wishes to command, and we must not fear that He could command what is not for our good.

CHAPTER 14

Must one experience evil in order to know evil?

31. It is impossible for the will of a man not to come tumbling down on him with a thunderous and devastating crash if he so exalts it as to prefer it to that of the One who is his superior. This is what man has experienced in his contempt of God's command, and by this experience he has learned the difference between good and evil, that is, the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, namely, of pride and contumacy, of the perverse imitation of God, and of pernicious liberty. The tree which was the occasion of this experience for man received its name from what happened there, as I explained above. For we would not feel evil except by experience, since there would be no evil unless we had committed it. Evil is not a substance: the loss of the good is what we call evil. God is the unchangeable Good; man, in what belongs to the nature in which God created him, is indeed a good, but not unchangeable Good as God is. A changeable good, which is inferior to the unchangeable Good, becomes a greater good when it adheres to the unchangeable Good, loving and serving Him with a rational and free response of the will. Hence, this nature so endowed is indeed a great good, because it has received the ability to cling to the highest Good. But if man is unwilling to do so, he deprives himself of the good, and in this he experiences evil, whence also by God's, justice even torment follows. For what could be more contrary to justice than the well-being of him who deserts the Good? Such a thing cannot possibly be, but sometimes the evil condition resulting from the loss of the higher good is not perceived by a man who possesses an inferior good which he loves. It is according to divine justice, however, that one who has voluntarily lost what he ought to have loved should suffer the pain of losing the object that he did love. Thus the Creator is praised in all things. It is also a good that a man grieves over the good he has lost; for unless some good had remained in his being, he would not feel the

punishment he has in his suffering over the loss of the good.

32. A person who loves the good without having any experience of evil, namely, one who before feeling the loss of the good chooses to hold on to it so as not to lose it, is of all mankind most worthy of praise. But if this were not a matter of singular merit, it would not be attributed to the Child of the race of Israel who receiving the name Emmanuel, "God is with us," reconciled us to God. He is the Man who is Mediator between man and God, the Word with God and flesh with us, the Word made flesh between God and us. Concerning Him the prophet said, *Before the Child knows good or evil, He will reject evil-doing in order to choose the good.* How does He reject or choose what He does not know except that these two are known in one way by the knowledge of good and in another way by the experience of evil? Through the knowledge of good, evil is known, although it is not felt. Good is held on to lest by loss of it evil be experienced. Furthermore, by the experience of evil, good is known, since a person feels what he lost when he finds it is evil to have lost the good. Hence, before the Child knew by experience a good which He would lack or an evil which He would feel in the loss of a good, He rejected evil to do good, that is, He was unwilling to lose what He had lest He feel the loss of what He ought not to lose. He gave a unique example of obedience, because He did not come to do His own will but the will of Him by whom He was sent. In this He differed from him who chose to do his own will, not the will of his Creator. Hence, it is rightly said, *As by one man's disobedience many have been made sinners, so by one Man's obedience many are made just, because as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

CHAPTER 15

How the tree of the knowledge of good and evil got its name.

33. Without good reason certain writers are deeply puzzled when they seek to discover how the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could have been so called before man broke God's commandment by touching it and from experience discerned the difference between the good that he lost and the evil that he committed. Now, this tree was given such a name so that our first parents might observe the prohibition and not touch it, taking care to avoid suffering the consequences of touching it against the prohibition. It was not because they subsequently went against the commandment and ate the fruit that the tree became the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but even if they had remained obedient and had taken nothing against that commandment, it would be correctly called by what would happen to them there if they had taken the fruit. Thus, a tree might be called the "tree of satiety" because from its fruit men could have their fill. Now, if no one approached this tree, the name would not thereby be incongruous. For when men would approach it and be filled, then they would prove that the tree was appropriately named.

CHAPTER 16

How man could have understood the meaning of evil before he experienced it.

34. How could man, they ask, understand what was said to him about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil when he was completely ignorant of the meaning of evil? Those who think this way do not notice how most unknown things are understood from their contraries which are known, so that even the names of nonexistent things can be used in conversation without puzzling the hearer. For instance, what is entirely nonexistent we call nihil (nothing); and anyone who understands and speaks Latin comprehends these two syllables. How does this happen except that when the mind sees what is, it recognizes by its privation what is not? The same thing can be said of the word "void." In gazing at the fullness of bodily substance, we understand by the privation of it the meaning of void as its

contrary. As for the sense of hearing, we make judgments not only about words but also about silence. So, in perceiving the life within him, a man might take precautions against its opposite, that is, the privation of life (which we call death) and against anything that would cause him to lose what was so dear to him; I mean any deed of his own which might lose him his life. It does not matter what syllables make up its name; one uses the Latin word *peccatum* (sin) or *malum* (evil), for example, as a sign of that which he fixes upon in his mind. For how do we understand what is meant when the resurrection is spoken of, which we have never experienced? Is it not because we are aware of what it is to live, and as we call the privation of that state death, so we designate as resurrection the return to the state which we perceive? And whatever word may be used to designate the same thing in any other language, the mind perceives a sign in the spoken word, and at the sound it recognizes what it would think even without the sign. It is remarkable how nature, even before any experience, avoids the loss of what it possesses. Who taught the beasts of the field to avoid death except a feeling they have for life? Who taught the small child in arms to cling to the one who carries him if that person threatens to throw the child to the ground? This fear begins at a certain time in the baby's life, yet it is before he experiences any such fall.

35. To the first man and woman, therefore, life was already sweet, and undoubtedly they tried to avoid losing it. When God instructed them in this matter, whatever sounds or other means He used, they were able to understand. They could not be persuaded to sin unless they were first persuaded that they would not die as a result, that is, that they would not lose what they possessed and what they found joy in possessing. We shall discuss this in its proper place. If there are those who are puzzled over how the first man and woman were able to understand God when He named or threatened what they had not experienced, they should take note and see how we recognize without any doubt or hesitation the names of all things outside of our experience only from their contraries which we have known, if they

are the names of privations, or from similar things, if they are the names of positive ideas. Surely no one will ask how the first man and woman were able to speak or to understand another speaking since they had not learned to speak by growing up among those who do or by studying under a teacher. It is certainly no problem for God to teach men to speak whom He had made in such a way that they could learn this art from others in case there were others present from whom they might learn.

CHAPTER 17

Was the prohibition against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil given to both the man and the woman?

36. With very good reason it is asked whether God gave his command to the man only or to the woman also. But the writer has not yet told how the woman was made. Can it be that she really was already made? On this supposition the writer has subsequently recapitulated what was previously done by telling how it was done. The words of Scripture are: *And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying....* The writer did not say, "He commanded them." Then he continues: *You may eat of every tree that is in Paradise.* He did not say, "You both may eat." Then God added: *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you [plural] shall not eat.* Here the verb is in the plural, presumably because God is addressing both of them; and then He concludes this command still using the plural form: *In the day that you eat of it you shall die.* Another explanation could be that, since God knew He was going to make the woman for the man, He thus gave His command with observance of the proper order so that the command of the Lord would come through the man to the woman. This is the rule that St. Paul urges in the church: *If they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home.*

CHAPTER 18

How God spoke to Adam.

37. We may also ask how God now spoke in such a way to the man whom He made, who was certainly from the beginning endowed with senses and intelligence, that this man could hear and understand what God said. For the man could not receive a command which it would be sinful for him to transgress unless he understood what he received. How, then, did God speak to him? Did He speak interiorly in his soul, through the understanding, so that the man would with wisdom understand the will and command of God without any corporeal sounds or likenesses of corporeal things? I do not think that God spoke in this way to the first man. The Scripture narrative is such that we are led rather to assume that God spoke to man in Paradise as He spoke later to the patriarchs, such as Abraham and Moses, namely, under some corporeal form. It is thus, indeed, that the first man and woman heard the voice of God as He walked in Paradise towards evening, and they hid themselves.

CHAPTER 19

What we must believe about God in order to understand the workings of His providence.

38. We have here a good opportunity that we ought not to neglect according to our ability and the measure of help and grace that God in His kindness gives us; I mean the opportunity to contemplate the twofold working of Divine Providence which I touched upon above in a passing way when I was speaking about the cultivation of the earth. My hope was that the mind of the reader would gradually become accustomed to contemplate this working of Providence, for this is a great help in keeping us from thinking anything unworthy of the divine nature. We say, then, that the sovereign, true, one, and only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that is, God and His Word and the Spirit of both, the Trinity without confusion and without separation, God who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, is not contained within any finite or

infinite region in space and is not subject to change with any finite or infinite unfolding of time. In the substance which is God there is no part that is less than the whole, as is necessarily the case with those substances that are in space; nor was there once in the divine substance anything that no longer is, nor will there be anything which is not yet, as is the case with substances that can be affected by change in time.

CHAPTER 20

Bodies are changeable in time and space; souls are changeable in time only; and God is not changeable in any way.

39. God, then, who lives in an unchangeable eternity, created simultaneously all things, from which the course of time would run and space would be filled and the ages would unfold by the movement of beings in time and space. He made some of these beings spiritual and some corporeal, forming matter which was not created by another and was not uncreated; but He and He alone made it unformed and formable, so that it would precede its formation not in time but in origin. He established the spiritual creation above the corporeal, because the spiritual is changeable only in time, but the corporeal is changeable in time and place. For example, a soul moves in time, remembering what it had forgotten, or learning what it did not know, or wishing what it did not wish; but a body moves in space, from earth to heaven, or from heaven to earth, or from east to west, or in some similar ways. Now, whatever moves through space must of necessity simultaneously move through time. But it is not necessary that everything which moves through time must also move through space. A substance, then, which moves only through time is more excellent than one that moves through time and space, but it is inferior to that which is immovable in both space and time. It follows, therefore, that just as a created spirit moves a body through time and space, although itself is moved through time only, so the Spirit who is Creator

moves a created spirit through time, although He is Himself unmoved in both time and space. But a created spirit moves itself through time and moves a body through time and space. The Creator Spirit, however, moves Himself independently of time and space, moves a created spirit through time without space, and moves a body through time and space.

CHAPTER 21

God, eternal and unchangeable, can move His creatures through time and space. The soul, unmoved in space, none the less moves the body in space.

40. One might try, then, to understand how the eternal God, truly eternal and truly immortal and unchangeable, who is not moved in space or time, moves His creatures through time and space. But in my opinion he cannot succeed in understanding this unless he first understands how the soul, that is, a created spirit, being moved not through space but only through time, moves the body through time and space. For if he cannot yet grasp what takes place in himself, how much less will he comprehend what is above him!
41. The soul, affected by its habitual contact with the bodily senses, presumes that when it is moving the body through space it itself is also moving through space with the body. But if it could carefully discern what might be called the pivots of the members of its body and see how they are in the joints throughout the whole body, it would observe how the beginnings of motion are in these places. It will discover that the members that are moved through space are not moved unless the motion proceeds from a part of the body that is stationary. For example, one finger alone is not moved unless the hand is stationary and the finger moves from its joint, which serves as a motionless pivot. When the whole hand, then, is moved from the elbow joint, the elbow from the humerus, and the humerus from the scapula, while the pivots from which the motion proceeds remain unmoved, the

member that is moved goes through space. Thus, the joint of the foot is in the ankle, and the foot moves while the ankle joint is motionless. So, too, the joint of the shank is in the knee, and that of the whole leg is in the hip. Now, the will causes no motion in any member whatsoever except from the pivot of some joint; and the command of the will originally directs the motion so that what is set in motion may be able to be impelled by that which does not move in space. Finally, in walking, one foot is not raised unless the other, firmly fixed, bears the weight of the whole body, while the foot in motion from the place at which it started to that where it is going is dependent upon the stationary joint which serves as a pivot.

42. The will, then, moves no member of the body through space except from a joint which remains unmoved. Furthermore, that part of the body which is moved and that part which is fixed so that the other can be moved has each its own corporeal dimensions by which it occupies space. With much greater reason, then, can we say that the soul which commands the movement remains unmoved in space. The members are subject to it, so that according to its desire the joint on which the member to be moved depends is firmly fixed. The soul is not a corporeal substance and does not fill the body in space as water does a skin bottle or a sponge, but in a mysterious way by its incorporeal command it is united to the body which it vivifies, and by this command it rules the body through an influence, not a corporeal mass. With all the more reason, then, the will commanding does not itself move through space in order to move the body through space when it moves the whole by means of the parts, without moving any parts in space except by means of those which it keeps immobile.

CHAPTER 22

Motion in space is impossible for a spiritual creature; motion in space and time is impossible for God.

43. Even if it is hard to understand, we should admit that a spiritual creature without local motion in itself moves a body through space, and that God without temporal motion in Himself moves a spiritual creature through time. One perhaps might not wish to admit this with regard to the soul, although without doubt he would not only admit it but also understand it if he could conceive of the soul as an incorporeal being, as it is. Indeed, is it not easily seen that a being which has no extension in space cannot have local motion? Whatever is extended in space is a body, and consequently the soul should not be thought of as moving in space if it is admitted that it is not a body. But if one is unwilling to admit this with regard to the soul, we need not be adamant in insisting on the point. However, unless one believes that the substance of God is without any motion either in time or in space, he does not yet believe that God is completely unchangeable.

CHAPTER 23

God, forever unchangeable, moves creatures through time and space, subjecting the lower to the higher in a hierarchical order.

44. The nature of the Trinity is absolutely immutable and hence so perfectly eternal that nothing can be coeternal with It. Dwelling with Itself and in Itself beyond all time and space, It nevertheless moves through time and space the creatures dependent upon It. It creates beings by Its goodness, and It rules wills by Its power, so that there is no being not from It, and as far as wills are concerned, there is no good will that It does not assist and no evil will that It cannot use for a good purpose. But since God did not give free will to all beings, those to whom He gave it are more powerful and more excellent, and those that do not have it are of necessity subject to those that do. All of this is by reason of the order established by the Creator, who never punishes an evil will to the extent of destroying the dignity of its nature. Since all bodies, then, and all irrational souls are without free will, they are subordinate to those beings that do have free will; not all of the

former, however, to all of the latter, but according to an order established by the justice of the Creator. Therefore, the providence of God rules and administers the whole creation, both natures and wills: natures in order to give them existence, wills so that those that are good may not be without merit, and those that are evil may not go unpunished. And that same God by His providence first of all subjects all creatures to Himself, and then corporeal creatures to the spiritual, the irrational to the rational, the earthly to the heavenly, the female to the male, the weak to the strong, and the poor to the rich. As far as wills are concerned, God subjects to Himself those that are good, and He subjects the wicked to those who serve Him, so that an evil will may suffer what a good will does by God's command, whether the good will does this by itself or by an evil will, but only in that domain which is by nature subject even to an evil will, namely, bodies. For evil wills have in themselves their own interior punishment, that is, their own wickedness.

CHAPTER 24

The role of the angels in the governance of the universe.

45. Hence, every corporeal being, every irrational life, every weak or wayward will is subjected to the heavenly angels who enjoy God, being subject to Him, and serve God in beatitude; and the angels' purpose is to accomplish in or with these subject creatures what the order of nature demands in all according to the decree of Him to whom all are subject. The angels see in God immutable truth, and according to it they direct their wills. Hence, they become partakers of His eternity, truth, and will forever beyond time and place. They are moved, however, by His command even in time, although He is not moved in time. They do not turn from or withdraw from the contemplation of Him, but they simultaneously contemplate Him without the limits of space and time and carry out His commands in their subjects, moving themselves through time and moving bodies through time and space in accordance with what is proper to their activity. Hence it is that God by the twofold working

of His providence is over all creatures, that is, over natures that they may have existence, and over wills that they may do nothing without either His command or His permission.

CHAPTER 25

How creatures receive intrinsic or extrinsic and corporeal or incorporeal help.

46. The whole corporeal creation, therefore, does not receive extrinsic assistance from any corporeal source. For outside of this whole corporeal creation there is no corporeal being; otherwise it would not be the whole. But intrinsically it is helped by an incorporeal force, since it is God who makes it possible for it to exist, *For from Him and through Him and in Him are all things*. Parts of this same whole are enabled by intrinsic help (or I should say, are made) to be subsistent beings; and they are assisted extrinsically by some corporeal force in their development, for example, by food, by cultivation of the land, by medicine, and by anything that serves for adornment so that they may be not only healthy and productive but also fair to behold.

47. Spiritual creatures, if they are perfect and blessed, as is the case with the holy angels, in so far as their own well-being is concerned are assisted only intrinsically by an incorporeal force in order to exist and be happy. God speaks to them interiorly in a mysterious and indescribable manner, not by letters put down with corporeal instruments, not by words sounding on corporeal ears, not by the likenesses of bodies produced imaginatively in the spirit, as, for example, in dreams or in a transport of the spirit, which in Greek is called *ecstasis* (a word which we have been using as a Latin word). This kind of vision, it is true, is more interior than what the soul perceives when using the bodily senses as messengers; nevertheless, it is similar to corporeal vision, so that when it happens it either cannot in any way be distinguished from corporeal vision or at best can be

distinguished only rarely and with difficulty. It is also more external than the kind of vision that takes place when the rational and intellectual soul beholds its object which it sees in unchangeable truth in the light of which it judges all else; and for these reasons the vision of ecstasy, in my judgment, should be classed as coming from an extrinsic source. A spiritual and intellectual creature, therefore, which is perfect and blessed, as the angels are, with respect to its own existence, wisdom, and beatitude is helped only intrinsically, as I have said, by the eternity, truth, and love of its Creator. If we must say that the angels receive any extrinsic help, perhaps we should say that they are helped only by the fact that they see one another and rejoice that they are joined in one society with God, that they see all creatures in these companions, and that therefore they give thanks and they praise their Creator. With respect to the activity of the angels by which God's providence looks out for the various classes of creatures in all the world, especially for the human race, they provide extrinsic help not only through visions presenting the likenesses of bodies but also through bodies themselves that are subject to the power of angels.

CHAPTER 26

God, without being moved Himself, moves the creatures which He has made.

48. Therefore, almighty God, who sustains all things and is always the same in His immutable eternity, truth, and will, without moving through time or space, moves His spiritual creation through time, and also moves His material creation through time and space. Consequently, by this motion He rules the beings which by His interior action He has made, ruling them extrinsically both by wills subject to Himself which He moves through time, and by bodies subject to Himself and to those wills, moving these bodies through time and space—in that time and space whose reason-principle is life in God beyond time and space. Hence, when God

does this, we ought not to think that His substance by which He is God is changeable in time and space or movable through time and space, but we should recognize these actions in the work of His divine providence. They are not in that work by which He creates beings, but in that by which He extrinsically rules what He has intrinsically created. Without any distance or measure of space, by His immutable and transcendent power He is interior to all things because they are all in Him, and exterior to all things because He is above them all. Moreover, without any distance or unit of time, by His immutable eternity He is more ancient than all things because He is before them all, and newer than all things because He is also after them all.

CHAPTER 27

How God spoke to Adam (Gen. 2:16–17).

49. Scripture says: And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying: “You may eat of every tree that is in Paradise, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. In the day that you eat of it you shall die.” Now when we hear these words, if we ask how God spoke them, we cannot understand precisely how He did so. Nevertheless, we should hold it for certain that God speaks either through His own substance or through a creature subject to Him, but that He does not speak through His own substance except in two cases: first, in creating the whole universe, and, second, in not only creating but also illuminating spiritual and intellectual creatures when they are able to grasp His utterance, which is in His Word, who was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God, and through the Word all things were made. But when God speaks to those who are unable to grasp His utterance, He speaks only through a creature. Now He may employ a spiritual creature exclusively, in a dream or ecstasy, using the likeness of material things; or He may speak through a corporeal creature, as the bodily senses are affected by a form that appears or the sound of a voice that is heard. 50. If Adam, therefore, was in such a state that he was able to grasp the utterance of God which

He makes present to the minds of angels through His own substance, there should be no doubt that God moved Adam's mind in time in a mysterious and unaccountable manner, without Himself being moved in time, impressing upon Adam's mind a useful and salutary precept of Truth, and in the same Truth revealing in an indescribable way the punishment awaiting the transgressor. It is thus that all good precepts are heard or seen in unchangeable Wisdom, which at times enters holy souls, although Wisdom itself does not move in time. But if the justice of Adam was such that he also needed the authority of another creature holier and wiser, through which he would come to know God's will and command, as we have needed the prophets and they have needed the angels, why do we doubt that God spoke to him through some such creature in a language which he could understand? When Scripture says later that when our first parents had sinned they heard the voice of the Lord as He walked in Paradise, no one who holds to the Catholic faith has any doubt that this was not done by means of the very substance of God Himself but by means of a creature subject to Him. On this point I have wished to comment more at length, because some heretics think that the substance of the Son of God was visible in itself before He assumed a body, and therefore they think that the Son of God before He took a body from the Virgin was seen by the patriarchs, on the theory that it was said only of God the Father, whom no man has seen or can see. According to them, the Son was seen in His own substance before He took on the form of a slave—an impious doctrine which a Catholic mind should put far from it. I shall discuss this question more fully elsewhere, please God. For the present, I have finished this book, and in the following book I must hope to discuss how the woman was created from the side of man.

BOOK NINE

The Creation of the Woman

CHAPTER 1

The meaning of earth in Gen. 2:19.

1. And the Lord God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone. Let Us make for him a helper like himself." And again God formed from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called a living creature, that is its name. And Adam gave names to all the cattle and to all the birds of heaven and to all the beasts of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper like himself. And God cast Adam into an ecstasy, and as Adam slept, God took one of his ribs and in its place put flesh, and the Lord God made the rib which He took from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she has been taken out of the man. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."

If my reader is helped at all by the reflections I have put down in the preceding books, I have no need to delay longer over the statement, Again God formed from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven. Earlier in this treatise I have explained to the best of my ability why the word "again" is used, that is, because of the first creation of creatures accomplished in the six days, when all were perfected in their causal principles and were begun in such a way that the causes would be brought subsequently to their effects. Now, if anyone thinks that a different solution of this problem should be offered, I ask only that he give careful attention to all the points I have considered in arriving at my opinion; and if he will then be able to set forth a more probable theory, I must not only not

oppose him but must even congratulate him.

2. A reader may be puzzled because the sacred writer did not say, “Again God formed from the earth all the beasts of the field and from the waters all the birds of heaven,” but as if God had formed both kinds from the earth, he said, And again God formed from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven. Now, there are two ways in which this statement can be understood. First, the writer may simply have not mentioned the material out of which God formed the birds of heaven because the reader would assume, without any explicit mention, that God is not supposed to have formed both kinds from the earth but only the beasts of the field, and thus we shall understand, even when Scripture is silent, what material it was from which God formed the birds of heaven in so far as we know that they have been produced from the waters in the original creation of the causal reasons. Another way to understand the text is to assume that the word “earth” has been used in its broadest sense as including the waters, as is done in the Psalm where, after exhorting the heavenly beings to voice their praises, the Psalmist turns to earth and says, Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all you deeps, without saying later, “Praise the Lord from the waters.” It is there that all the deeps are, although they praise the Lord from the earth. And it is there also that all the creeping creatures and all the winged creatures are, and yet they praise the Lord from the earth. On the basis of this very broad meaning of the word “earth,” in which it is used in reference to the whole world in the words God who made heaven and earth, whatever has been created from either dry land or from the waters is rightly understood to have been created from the earth.

CHAPTER 2

How God spoke when He said, “It is not good that the man should be alone. Let Us make for him a helper like himself.”

3. Let us see now how we must understand the words of God when He said, It is not good that the man should be alone. Let Us make for him a helper like himself. Did God speak this in words and syllables uttered in time? Or perhaps the writer is referring to the reason principle which was primordially in the Word of God determining the nature of woman, the reason principle to which Scripture also referred previously in the words, And God said, “Let there be this or that,” when all things were created in the beginning. Or perhaps God said this in the mind of the man himself, as He sometimes speaks to His servants interiorly. Such a servant of God was the one who said in one of the Psalms, I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me. Again, it is possible that a revelation about this matter was made interiorly to the man by an angel through a resemblance of the sounds of human speech, although Scripture has not said whether this might have occurred in sleep or in ecstasy, for it is in such states that this kind of revelation is usually made. Or could it have been in some other way, like the revelations made to the prophets, regarding which one of them said, And the angel who spoke to me said in me? Again, a real voice might have resounded through a corporeal creature, as happened when the voice came from a cloud, This is My Son.

We cannot know for certain which one of all these possible explanations is the true one. But there are two things about which we should have no doubt, on the one hand, God said the words we are considering, and, on the other, if He spoke using a material voice or a resemblance of a material voice resounding in time, He did not speak by His own substance but by some creature subject to His power, as I have explained in the preceding book.

4. God has been seen also in later days by holy men, now with His head as white as wool, now with the lower part of His body like brass, and in different ways on different occasions. But God did not give these visions to men through His own substance by which He is what He is, but through creatures which He made subject to Himself, and through resemblances of corporeal forms and voices He

manifested and spoke what He desired. This is absolutely certain to those who faithfully believe or clearly understand that the Trinity is immutable and eternal, though unmoved through time and space, yet moving creatures through time and space. Therefore, our task now is not to seek how God spoke the words He uttered, but rather to understand what He said. Indeed, Eternal Truth Itself, through which all things have been created, assures us that it was necessary that there should be made for man a helper like himself, and in that Eternal Truth he understands this who is able to discover in It why a creature has been made.

CHAPTER 3

The woman as a helper. God's plan for procreation.

5. If one should ask why it was necessary that a helper be made for man, the answer that seems most probable is that it was for the procreation of children, just as the earth is a helper for the seed in the production of a plant from the union of the two. This purpose was declared in the original creation of the world: Male and female He made them. And God blessed them and said, "Increase and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it." This reason for creation and union of male and female, as well as this blessing, was not abrogated after the sin and punishment of man. It is by virtue of this blessing that the earth is now filled with human beings who subdue it.
6. Although it was after the expulsion of the man and woman from Paradise that they came together in sexual intercourse and begot children, according to Scripture, nevertheless I do not see what could have prohibited them from honorable nuptial union and the bed undefiled even in Paradise. God could have granted them this if they had lived in a faithful and just manner in obedient and holy service to Him, so that without the tumultuous ardor of passion and without any labor and pain of childbirth, offspring would be born from their seed. In this case, the purpose

would not be to have children succeeding parents who die. Rather those who had begotten children would remain in the prime of life and would maintain their physical strength from the tree of life which had been planted in Paradise. Those who would be born would develop to the same state, and eventually, when the determined number would be complete, if all lived just and obedient lives, there would be a transformation, so that without any death their natural bodies would receive a new quality since they obeyed every command of the spirit that ruled them, and with the spirit alone vivifying them, without any help from corporeal nourishment, they would be called spiritual bodies. This could have been if the transgression of God's command had not merited the punishment of death.

7. Those who think that this could not have been look at nothing but the ordinary course of nature as it is after man's sin and the punishment he received. But we ought not to be in the number of those who accept only what they have been accustomed to see. For one could not reasonably doubt that such a privilege as I have described could have been given to a person who lived an obedient and holy life, especially if there is no doubt that the garments of the Israelites were kept in their original condition so that through forty long years they showed no wear.

CHAPTER 4

Why was there no nuptial union in Paradise?

8. Why, then, did they not have intercourse until they had left Paradise? The reason is that soon after the creation of the woman, before they had relations, they committed the sin because of which they were destined to die and because of which they went forth from the place of their blessedness. As a matter of fact, Scripture has not specified the length of time between their creation and the birth of their son Cain.

One might also say that the delay was due to the fact that God had not yet ordered

them to come together in nuptial union. For why should they not await God's authorization for this, since there was no drive of concupiscence coming from rebellious flesh? God had not ordered such a union because He provided for everything in the light of His foreknowledge, in which He undoubtedly foresaw their fall, as a result of which the human race was to be generated as a mortal race.

CHAPTER 5

In what sense Eve was made as a helper for Adam.

9. Now, if the woman was not made for the man to be his helper in begetting children, in what was she to help him? She was not to till the earth with him, for there was not yet any toil to make help necessary. If there were any such need, a male helper would be better, and the same could be said of the comfort of another's presence if Adam were perhaps weary of solitude. How much more agreeably could two male friends, rather than a man and woman, enjoy companionship and conversation in a life shared together. And if they had to make an arrangement in their common life for one to command and the other to obey in order to make sure that opposing wills would not disrupt the peace of the household, there would have been proper rank to assure this, since one would be created first and the other second, and this would be further reinforced if the second were made from the first, as was the case with the woman. Surely no one will say that God was able to make from the rib of the man only a woman and not also a man if He had wished to do so. Consequently, I do not see in what sense the woman was made as a helper for the man if not for the sake of bearing children.

CHAPTER 6

How Adam and Eve, if they had not sinned, might have been transported to a better life after they had begotten children on earth.

10. If it had been necessary for parents to depart from this life and be succeeded by their children, so that the human race by the departure and arrival of generations would reach a determined number of persons, it would have been possible for them, once they had begotten children and in a holy manner completed their human task, to be removed to a better life not by death but by a transformation. Now this transformation could have been the final one in which they will receive their bodies and become holy like the angels in heaven, or, if that was not to be granted until it will be given to all men at the end of the world, it could have been something less than that, but a change none the less to a better state than this body of ours has or the original bodies had when God made the man from the slime of the earth and the woman from the body of the man.

11. For we must not think that Elijah is now as the saints will be when the day's work will be done and they will all receive a denarius, or, on the other hand, that his state is like that of men who have not yet gone out of this life. Elijah, indeed, departed hence not by dying but by being transported elsewhere. Consequently, he now possesses something better than he could have had in this life, but he does not yet have what he is to possess on the last day as a reward for his life of faithful service. For they foretold a better lot for us, that they might not arrive at complete perfection without us. If anyone supposes that Elijah could not have merited this blessing if he had married and begotten children, he is presumed not to have had a wife and children because Scripture does not say he had, although it also says nothing about his celibacy, what will our objector say about Enoch, who begot children and, being pleasing to God, did not die but was carried off?

Why, then, if Adam and Eve had lived a holy life and in chastity had brought forth children, could they not have yielded place to their successors not by dying but by being transported to another life? Enoch and Elijah, both dead in Adam and bearing in their flesh the seeds of death, will return to this life, as it is believed, to pay this debt, and after so long a delay will die. But now they are in another life,

where, before the resurrection of the body, and before the natural body is changed to a spiritual one, they are not wasted by disease or old age.

If this is so, then, with how much more justice and good reason would it be granted to the first human beings, who were living without any sin of their own or of their parents, to be brought to some better life, yielding place to their children, and hence at the end of the world, with all the saints descended from them, to be changed into a more blessed form like the angels, not by the death of the body but by the power of God?

CHAPTER 7

The good of marriage.

12. I do not see, therefore, in what other way the woman was made to be the helper of the man if procreation is eliminated, and I do not understand why it should be eliminated. How explain the great merit and high honor that faithful and holy virginity has in God's eyes except that in this time to refrain from embracing, when there is a vast crowd from all nations to fill up the number of the saints, the urge to experience base pleasure of the flesh does not demand what is not required for the provision of offspring? Finally, the weakness of both sexes, with its inclination to depravity and ruin, is wisely saved by honorable marriage, so that what could have been a duty for men in a healthy state is a healing remedy for those who are sick. For from the fact that incontinence is an evil it does not follow that marriage is not good, even when by it an incontinent couple are united in the flesh. As a matter of fact, the good of marriage is not blameworthy because of the evil of incontinence, but because of this good that evil becomes allowable, venial. For what is good in marriage and that by which marriages are good can never be a sin.

Now this good is threefold, fidelity, offspring, and sacrament. Fidelity means that there must be no relations with any other person outside the marriage bond.

Offspring means that children are to be lovingly received, brought up with tender care, and given a religious education. Sacrament means that the marriage bond is not to be broken, and that if one partner in a marriage should be abandoned by the other, neither may enter a new marriage even for the sake of having children. This is what may be called the rule of marriage, by it the fertility of nature is made honorable and the disorder of concupiscence is regulated.

Hence, since I have discussed this subject at length in the book I recently published called *The Good of Marriage*, in which I distinguished the continence of widowhood and the excellence of virginity according to the honor of these two states, there is no need to treat this matter further in this book.

CHAPTER 8

In the attempt to avoid evil it is difficult not to fall into the opposite vice.

13. We now ask what help the woman could give the man if they were not allowed intercourse in Paradise for the purpose of begetting children. Those who have this problem perhaps suppose that all union of the sexes is sinful. For it is difficult for people who try to avoid certain vices not to rush quickly in a misguided way into their contraries. Thus, a person dreading avarice becomes prodigal, and dreading extravagance becomes avaricious. A man becomes restless if you blame him for indolence, or indolent if you blame him for restlessness. He who has been reprehended for his boldness and has come to detest it takes refuge in timidity; he who tries not to be too timid rids himself of restraint and becomes rash, and thus evil deeds are judged not by reason but by opinion. So it is that people who do not know what is condemned by God's law respecting adultery and fornication come to denounce conjugal union even when it is for the sake of procreation.

CHAPTER 9

The woman would have been the man's helper in procreation even if they had not become subject to death by their sin.

14. There are those who do not misunderstand the nature of marriage, but none the less suppose that the power of reproduction has been given by God to provide for the succession of generations of mortal men. They do not think that the first man and woman could have had carnal union except for the fact that because of their sin they were destined to die and would thus beget children to take their places. But those who think thus do not reflect on the fact that, if successors could have been sought by those destined to die, with greater reason companions could have been sought by those destined to remain living. If the earth indeed were filled with the human race, it would be true that offspring would be sought only to succeed those who would die. But if the earth was to be filled by two human beings, how could they carry out this obligation to society except by procreation?

Who is so blind as not to see that the human race is a distinguished ornament for the earth even when only a few men live good and praiseworthy lives, and that public order is of great importance when it keeps even sinners within the limits set by a certain kind of earthly peace? In spite of the fact that mankind has fallen, even sinners are superior to the beasts and birds. And yet, who does not find pleasure in contemplating this lower part of the universe, which is adorned with all these kinds of animals in keeping with its place in the whole? But no one is so lacking in understanding as to think that the world would have been less adorned if it were filled with human beings in the state of original justice who would not die.

15. The vast number of angels in the heavenly city cannot be adduced as proof that man and woman would not be joined in conjugal union if they were not to die. Indeed, the perfect number of saints destined to rise and join the angels was foreseen by the Lord when He said, In the resurrection they will neither be married

nor take wives, for they will not be subject to death, but will enjoy equality with the angels of God. Here, indeed, the earth was to be filled with men, and in view of the close ties of relationship and the bond of unity so earnestly desired, it was to be populated by men from one common ancestor. For what other purpose, then, was a female helper similar to the man sought unless it was to have the female sex assist in the sowing of the human race, as the fertility of the earth does in the sowing of crops?

CHAPTER 10

If Adam had not sinned, procreation would have taken place in Paradise without the ardor of passion.

16. Nevertheless, it may be better and more fitting to assume that the natural bodies of the couple put in Paradise were of such a nature that, before they were condemned to die, they did not have an appetite for carnal pleasure such as our bodies, sprung from mortal stock, today possess. One cannot say that nothing happened in Adam and Eve when they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. God had not said to them, “If you eat of it, you shall die,” but, In the day that you eat of it you shall die. The result was that that very day wrought in them what St. Paul laments when he says: I delight in the law of God according to the inner man, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Unhappy man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death. The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. It would not be sufficient if he said, “Who will deliver me from this mortal body?” But he said, from this body of death. In a similar way he says elsewhere, The body indeed is dead because of sin. He did not say, “The body is mortal,” but, The body is dead, although it was certainly also mortal because it was destined to die. Therefore, although the bodies of our first parents were natural bodies, not spiritual bodies, we should not suppose that they were dead before they sinned, I

mean necessarily destined for death, that is what happened to them on the day on which they touched the tree against the prohibition.

17. Our bodies have a normal healthy state proper to them. If this condition so deteriorates that a deadly disease consumes the internal organs, and the physicians, after examining the patient, decide that death is imminent, the body is then said to be dying, but not in the same sense as when it was healthy, although then too it was destined to die some day.

Hence, the first human pair had natural bodies indeed, but bodies destined to die only if they sinned, bodies that would have received an angelic form and heavenly quality. But when they disobeyed God's command, their bodies contracted, as it were, the deadly disease of death, and this changed the gift by which they had ruled the body so perfectly that they would not say, I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind. For although the body before the fall was not yet spiritual, but rather natural, nevertheless it was not this body of death from which and with which we have been born. What, indeed, is this life from our birth, even from our conception, but the beginning of a sickness by which we must die. Death is no more inevitable for the man with dropsy or consumption or elephantiasis than for the infant whose life has just begun in this body in which all men are by nature children of wrath, a condition which is a punishment for sin.

18. Why, therefore, may we not assume that the first couple before they sinned could have given a command to their genital organs for the purpose of procreation as they did to the other members which the soul is accustomed to move to perform various tasks without any trouble and without any craving for pleasure. For the almighty Creator, worthy of praise beyond all words, who is great even in the least of His works, has given to the bees the power of reproducing their young just as they produce wax and honey.

Why, then, should it seem beyond belief that He made the bodies of the first

human beings in such a way that, if they had not sinned and had not immediately thereupon contracted a disease which would bring death, they would move the members by which offspring are generated in the same way that one commands his feet when he walks, so that conception would take place without passion and birth without pain. But as it is, by disobeying God's command they deserved to experience in their members, where death now reigned, the movement of a law at war with the law of the mind, a movement that marriage regulates and continence controls and restrains, so that where punishment has followed sin, there merit will come from punishment.

CHAPTER 11

The woman was created for procreation, which would have taken place in Paradise without any uncontrolled desire.

19. The woman, then, with the appearance and distinctive physical characteristics of her sex, was made for the man from the man. She brought forth Cain and Abel and all their brothers, from whom all men were to be born, and among them she brought forth Seth, through whom the line descended to Abraham and the people of Israel, the nation long well known among all men, and it was through the sons of Noah that all nations sprang.

Whoever calls these facts into question undermines all that we believe, and his opinions should be resolutely cast out of the minds of the faithful. Consequently, when someone asks what help the woman was intended to give the man, as I carefully consider to the best of my ability all that we are told, I can think of no other purpose than the procreation of children in order to fill the earth with their descendants. But the begetting of children by the first man and woman was not to have been as it is today, when there is the law of sin in the members at war with the law of the mind, even though virtue overcomes it by the grace of God. For we must believe that this condition could not have existed except in this body of

death, a body that is dead because of sin. What punishment could have been more deserved than that the body, made to serve the soul, should not be willing to obey every command of the soul, just as the soul herself refused to serve her Lord.

It is possible that God creates both body and soul from the parents, the body from their bodies, the soul from their souls. Or could it be that He creates souls some other way. But whatever is the case, it is not for some impossible task nor for any trifling reward that He creates the soul. And when it is devout and faithful to God, it conquers with the help of His grace the law of sin in the members of this body of death, which the first man received as a punishment, and thus it gains a heavenly reward with greater glory, showing how praiseworthy is that obedience which by virtue was able to triumph over the punishment deserved by another's disobedience.

CHAPTER 12

The animals were brought to Adam, and he named them, Gen. 2:19 to 20. There must be a figurative meaning in this event.

20. I think I have sufficiently searched for God's purpose in making the woman as the man's helper. Now we must try to understand why all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air were brought to Adam to be named by him, and why thereafter there seemed to be a need to create for him a woman made from his side since no helper had been found for him like himself among the animals.

There seems to me to be a prophetic meaning in what took place, but none the less it did take place, so that with the occurrence of the event established we are free to seek its figurative meaning. How are we to interpret the fact that Adam gave names to the birds and to the animals on the earth but not to the fish and all the creatures of the waters. If we examine the various languages of mankind, we see that these living beings are called by names men have given them in their ordinary speech. And this is true not only of creatures in the water and on the earth but also

of the earth itself, the water, the sky, what appears in the sky, and what does not appear but is believed to be there, all are called by different names in the different languages of the world. We know, of course, that there was originally just one language before man in his pride built the tower after the flood and caused human society to be divided according to different languages. And whatever the original language was, what point is there in trying to discover it. It was certainly the language Adam spoke, and in that language, if it has survived to our time, there are those words that were uttered when the first man named the beasts and the birds.

It is hardly believable, then, that the names of fishes in that language were determined not by man but by God and that man subsequently learnt them from God who taught him. But even if this did happen, the reason for it would certainly contain some mystical meaning. We must assume, however, that names were gradually given to various kinds of fish as they became known. But originally the herds, the beasts, and the birds were brought to the man, and when they had gathered before him and he had distinguished them according to their kinds, he gave them their names, although he could have given these names gradually also, but much more quickly than in the case of the fishes, if they were not named with the rest. Now, what is the reason for all this if there was not a plan to signify something which would be able to foreshadow the future. The order of the narrative provides for this purpose very effectively.

21. God was surely not ignorant of the fact that He had created nothing among the animals that was like the man and able to be his helper. Was it necessary that the man also should recognize his need and thereby receive his wife as a more precious gift because, in all flesh created under heaven and living in this atmosphere in which he was placed, he found nothing else like her. But it would be strange if he could not have known this unless all the animals had been brought to him and placed before his eyes. For if he had faith in God, God could have told

him this in the same way in which He gave a command and questioned him when he sinned and passed judgment on him. On the other hand, if he did not have faith in God, he surely would not have known whether God, in whom he had no faith, had brought all animals to him, or whether He could have hidden in some remote corners of the world other animals like the man which He did not disclose. Hence I have no doubt that this all happened for the sake of some prophetic meaning, but none the less it really happened.

22. But in this treatise I have not attempted to examine prophetic mysteries but to interpret the narrative as a faithful history of events that happened. Thus I hope that what could seem impossible to the shallow reader and the unbeliever or at variance with the authority of Sacred Scripture itself by reason of what is alleged to be contradictory evidence, I may show by my discussion, as far as I can with God's help, to be neither impossible nor contradictory. With respect to what can appear to some readers as possible and free of any obvious contradiction, but nevertheless somewhat unnecessary or even foolish, I hope to show by my investigation that the event has not happened in the natural and customary order of things. I hope the result will be that our minds will esteem as trustworthy the authority of Sacred Scripture and assume that since it cannot be foolish it must have a mystical meaning. Indeed, I may have already considered and proposed such a figurative interpretation elsewhere or may decide to postpone it to another time.

CHAPTER 13

The narrative of the formation of the woman suggests some prophetic meaning.

23. What, then, is the meaning of the statement that the woman was made from the side of the man. Let us assume that it was fitting for it to be done that way in order to emphasize the union of the man and woman. But did reason or necessity also

demand that this be done while Adam slept. And that a rib be removed and flesh supplied to fill the empty space. Could not rather flesh have been removed more appropriately for the formation of the woman, who belongs to the weaker sex. Since God was able to add so many other parts and build the rib into a woman, we cannot say He was unable to do the same with flesh after He had made man himself from the dust. And if a rib had to be removed, why was not another rib made to replace it. Furthermore, why was it not said “He formed” or “He made,” as it was said with respect to all the preceding works. But the text says, The Lord God built the rib, as if there was question of a house rather than a human body. Since these events took place, therefore, and cannot be senseless happenings, there can be no doubt that they occurred to signify something and that God, who knows the future, mercifully foreshadowed in His works from the very beginning of the human race the fruit of ages to come, and He has willed that certain things written down should be revealed in due time to His servants by tradition handed down through succeeding generations, or by His Holy Spirit, or by the ministry of angels, in order to give testimony about promises to be fulfilled in the future and signs by which men may recognize those that have come to pass. This will become clearer and clearer in what follows.

CHAPTER 14

God brought the animals to Adam by the ministry of angels.

24. In this treatise I have attempted to find not the foreshadowing of future events but the events which actually happened, understood in their proper rather than allegorical meaning. With this in mind, then, let us see how these words of Scripture can be taken, And again God formed from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven, this much I have already interpreted in the sense in which I understood it and discussed it to the extent I thought necessary, and brought them all to Adam to see what he would call them.

Now, we should not imagine God bringing the animals to Adam in a crudely material way. What I have said in the preceding book about the twofold working of Divine Providence should be a help here. We must not suppose that the animals were brought to Adam as when hunters and fowlers seek them out and drive them into their nets when they engage in the chase. Nor was there a command spoken by a voice from a cloud in words which rational creatures on hearing would understand and obey. Beasts and birds have not received such power. But according to their nature they obey God, not by a rational free choice of the will but according to the plan by which God moves all creatures at the appropriate times. Although He is Himself unmoved in time, the angels who minister to Him understand in His Word what things are to be done at appointed times. And hence, without any temporal motion in God, the angels are moved in time to accomplish His will in the creatures that are subject to them.

25. All living souls, not only rational souls as in men, but also irrational souls as in beasts, birds, and fishes, are moved by what they see. But a rational soul by a free choice of the will either assents to what it sees or withholds its assent. An irrational soul, however, is not able to make such a decision, according to its nature and character it is set in motion at the sight of an object. Furthermore, no soul has control over the objects that meet its vision, whether it is a question of the exterior vision of the eyes or the interior vision of the imagination, and the appetite of every living being is moved by what it sees. Thus, when these visions are brought about through the ministry of angels obeying God's will, a divine command comes not only to men and not only to birds and beasts but also to creatures hidden beneath the waters, like the sea monster that swallowed Jonah, and not only to these larger creatures, but even to worms. For it is written that God's command was given to a worm to eat the root of the gourd in whose shade the prophet had rested.

Now, God gave to man when He created him a power over the lower animals

which he did not lose when he sinned, so that he is able to capture and tame not only cattle and beasts of burden, training them for his needs, and not only birds that he domesticates, but also those that fly at liberty as well as all sorts of wild beasts, and thus he is able to dominate these creatures by the power of reason and not just by physical force. Gaining control over them, therefore, through their appetites and sense of pain, and gradually alluring them, restraining them, and giving them some freedom, he rules them, and ridding them of their fierce ways, he develops in them habits that are almost human. How much more readily, then, can this be done by the angels, who by the command of God, which they see in His immutable Truth, which they never cease to behold, move through time and with marvelous ease move bodies subject to them through time and space, producing in all living souls objects of vision to move them and appetites for bodily needs, so that unwittingly they are drawn where they should go.

CHAPTER 15

The making of the first woman. How the angels can minister to God in creation, although they cannot create.

26. Now let us see how the woman was formed, or how she was built, to use the mysterious language of Scripture. The substance of the woman was created not by any activity of substances already existing, although it was created from the substance of the man, which was already in existence. Angels cannot create any substances whatsoever. The one and only Creator of every substance, whether great or small, is God, that is, the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is one thing to ask how Adam was put to sleep and a rib taken from his body without his feeling any pain. We perhaps might say that angels could have done this. But to form or build a rib into a woman, this could not have been done except by God, on whom every substance depends. Indeed, even the supplying of the flesh in the body of Adam to fill the place of the rib could not have been done, in my opinion,

by the angels any more than the creation of man himself from the dust of the earth. I am not saying that the angels have no place in assisting God in creation, but they are not creators any more than farmers are creators of the crops and the trees. For neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but only God who gives the growth. This growth includes filling in with flesh part of the human body where a bone has been removed. Such a thing is done by the work of God, that work by which He gives being to substances that He makes, including the angels, who are also His creation.

27. The work of the farmer is to channel the water when he irrigates. But it is not his work to make water flow down, that is rather the work of Him who has ordered all things in measure and number and weight. It is also the farmer's work to take a shoot from a tree and plant it in the ground. But it is not his work to take in moisture and to put forth buds, or to turn part of the new tree down into the ground to build up the roots, and to direct another part up above the ground in order to build up its strength and spread its branches, all this is done by Him who gives the increase. A physician, similarly, gives nourishment to a sick body and applies medicine to a wound. Now, two points should be observed in this, first, he does not create the food and medicine, but finds them made by the work of the Creator, and secondly, he is able to prepare food or drink and administer it, and to make a plaster and smear it with ointment and then apply it to the right place, but from these means he employs he is not able to produce or create energy or flesh. Nature does this by an interior force hidden from us. But if God withdraws the intimate activity by which He creates this substance and keeps it in being, it will in effect be destroyed immediately and nothing will remain.

28. God, then, governs all His creation by a kind of twofold working of His providence, about which I have spoken in the preceding book, and He rules all creatures by natural and voluntary forces. But an angel can no more create a

substance than he can create himself. The will of an angel, however, which gives obedient service to God and carries out His commands, is able to work on things subject to him, using them as a kind of matter and employing forces of nature, so that something is created in time in accordance with the uncreated formative principles in the Word of God or in accordance with the formative principles causally created in the works of the first six days. The angel's function in such a case is like that of the farmer or the physician.

Who, then, can dare to say what ministry the angels performed for God in the making of the first woman. I would say without hesitation that the flesh formed in place of the rib, the body and soul of the woman, the shaping of the bodily members, all the inner organs, all the senses, and whatever there was by which she was a creature, a human being, a woman, all this was done by the work of God, which God did not do by the angels but by Himself, not creating His work and then leaving it, but unceasingly creating it, so that no creature would continue to exist, not even the angels, were He not working by His creative act.

CHAPTER 16

The difficulty of understanding the ways in which life is created.

29. In so far as our powers of observation and our human intelligence can understand nature, we have no evidence that any flesh with life and sensation is born unless it is from one of four sources, either from water and earth, which serve as its material elements, or from the shoots or the fruits of trees, or from the flesh of animals, as happens in the case of countless kinds of worms and reptiles, or from the copulation of parents. We know of no flesh born of the flesh of any living being, like it in everything except sex. Hence, we are seeking in nature for a similar occurrence of this creation by which a woman has been made from the side of a man, and we can find none. The reason for our ignorance is that although we know how men work in this world, we do not know how angels cultivate the earth,

if I may use the expression.

If the ordinary processes of nature were to produce a certain kind of bush without human labor, we should know nothing else than that trees and plants were born from the earth and also from their seeds falling again to the earth. But we should know nothing about grafting, by which a tree of a given kind with its own roots could bear two kinds of fruits, the one proper to its own nature and the other proper to the branch that has been grafted on, both nourished from the same trunk. We have learnt this from the work of farmers. They are not, of course, the creators of trees, but to God, the Creator of the processes of nature, they offer their aid and service. For nothing would come about by their labors unless a hidden causal reason contained the product in God's work of creation.

Why is it strange, therefore, if we do not know of a human being, a woman, made from the bone of a man, since we are ignorant of the ways in which angels minister to God the Creator. We should have been unable to know that a branch from one tree could have been grafted on to another tree so as to become part of it if we were ignorant of the way farmers minister to God who creates these wonders.

30. We have no doubt, however, that God alone is the Creator of men and trees, and we firmly believe that the woman was made from the man without the aid of human procreation, even though the rib of the man may have been obtained by angels for the work of the Creator. In a similar manner, we firmly believe that a Man was also made from a woman without any nuptial embrace when the offspring of Abraham was placed through the angels in the hands of a Mediator. Unbelievers consider both of these events beyond belief. But for believers, why should the account of the conception of Christ be accepted in the literal sense and the account of the creation of Eve be accepted only in a figurative sense. Are we to say that without any sexual embrace a man could have been made from a woman but not a woman from a man. Did the womb of the Virgin have the power to

produce a Man, whereas the side of the man had no power to produce the woman, although in the former case the Lord would be born of His handmaid, and in the latter a handmaid would be born of a servant.

The Lord would have been able to create His flesh from a rib or from any member of the Virgin, but He who could have demonstrated that He had done again in the case of His own body what had been done before, deemed it more salutary to show that in the body of His Mother there was no cause for shame, where all was chaste.

CHAPTER 17

Was the manner of the creation of Eve determined in the reason principle as a necessity or possibility.

31. One may ask in what way God created the woman in causal reasons when He created the first man to His image and likeness, for Scripture says at that point in the narrative, Male and female He made them. Did the reason principle which God concreated and mingled with the works that He made in the world have the determination by which the woman would necessarily come from the rib of the man. Or did it have only the potency from which this development could come, so that the actual determination would have been hidden in God's plans and not necessarily determined in the reason principle.

If this is the question, I will give my opinion without holding it tenaciously, but when I have proposed it, perhaps believers who are well grounded in the faith, upon thoughtfully weighing my suggestions, will accept them without doubt even though this is the first time they have considered them.

32. The ordinary course of nature in the whole of creation has certain natural laws in accordance with which even the spirit of life, which is a creature, has its own appetites, determined in a sense, which even a bad will cannot elude. The elements of the physical world also have a fixed power and quality determining for each

thing what it can do or not do and what can be done or not done with it. From these elements all things which come to be in due time have their origin and development as well as their end and dissolution according to their kind. Thus, a bean does not come from a grain of wheat nor wheat from a bean, and a man does not come from a beast nor a beast from a man.

Over this whole movement and course of nature there is the power of the Creator, who is able to do in all creatures something other than what the seminal reasons would bring about, but not something that He Himself had not originally made possible to be done by Him in them. For He is all powerful not by arbitrary power but by the strength of wisdom, and in the course of time He does with each thing what He originally has made possible in it. There is, then, the mode of being by which this plant grows one way and that another way, by which one time of life is fertile, another is not, by which a human being can speak, a beast cannot. The formative principles of these and similar modes of being are not only in God but have also been inserted by Him into creatures and joined to them. But that a tree which has been cut down, dried out, polished, without any root or earth or water, should suddenly flower and bring forth fruit, that a woman sterile in her youth should bear a child in her old age, that an ass should speak, and so on with other examples, God gave to the substances which He created the possibility that these actions could happen in them, for not even He would do in them what He Himself predetermined was impossible to be done in them, since He Himself is not more powerful than Himself, nevertheless, according to another mode of being He gave to these creatures the determination that these occurrences would not happen by virtue of natural forces but by virtue of the fact that they had been created so that their nature would be under the influence of a more powerful will.

CHAPTER 18

The mystery of the creation of Eve and the origin of the Church. The ministry of the angels.

33. God, therefore, has in Himself the hidden causes of certain things which He has not placed in creatures, and He makes them operative not in the work of His ordinary providence by which He brings things into being, but in that work by which He administers according to His will the things that He has created as He has willed. In this sphere of God's action is the grace by which sinners are saved. For nature corrupted by its own evil will is unable to return to God through its own efforts, but it can do so through the grace of God, by which it is helped and renewed. We must not give up hope for men because of what Scripture says, None who walk with her, the strange woman, will return. For this was said of man in view of the weight of his sinfulness, so that he who will return may not attribute his return to himself but to the grace of God, not because of his works, so that he may not glory.

34. Hence, St. Paul has said that the mystery of this grace was hidden, not in the world, in which the causal reasons of all things destined to come forth in the processes of nature have been hidden, as Levi was hidden in the loins of Abraham when he paid tithes, but in God who created all. Therefore, all things that have been made not in the natural development of things, but in a miraculous way to signify this grace, have had their causes also hidden in God.

An example of such a thing might be seen in the fact that the woman was made from the side of the man, indeed, while he was asleep, and she was made strong through him, being strengthened by his bone, but he was made weak for her sake because in place of his rib it was flesh, not another rib, that was substituted. But it was not determined in the original creation that the woman was to be created in precisely that way, when on the sixth day, according to Scripture, Male and female

He made them. This act of creation determined only the possibility that it could be done thus, so that God would do nothing by a changeable will contrary to the causes which His will created. How it came to pass that there was to be no other outcome, this was hidden in God, the Creator of all things.

35. St. Paul says that it was hidden so that to the principalities and powers in the heavens it would be made known through the Church of the manifold wisdom of God. Now, the offspring to whom the promise was made was placed through the angels in the hands of a Mediator, hence, we may assume with some probability that everything done miraculously beyond the ordinary course of nature to foretell or proclaim in the world the coming of the offspring was done through the ministry of angels, and yet, there is no other who creates or restores creatures anywhere than He who alone gives the increase no matter who plants or waters.

CHAPTER 19

The prophetic vision seen by Adam in his ecstasy.

36. Hence, we are justified in concluding that the ecstasy in which Adam was caught up when God cast him into a sleep was given to him so that his mind in that state might participate with the host of angels and, entering into the sanctuary of God, understand what was finally to come. When he awoke, he was like one filled with the spirit of prophecy, and seeing his wife brought before him, he immediately opened his mouth and proclaimed the great mystery which St. Paul teaches, This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman, because she has been taken out of man. And for this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.

These were the words of the first man according to the testimony of Scripture, but in the Gospel our Lord declared that God spoke them. For He says, Have you not

read that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. From this we should understand, therefore, that because of the ecstasy which Adam had just experienced he was able to say this as a prophet under divine guidance.

But it seems advisable to bring this book to an end at this point, so that in what follows we may revive the attention of the reader with a fresh start.

BOOK TEN

THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SOUL

CHAPTER 1

The theory that the soul of Eve was made from the soul of Adam

1. The natural order of this treatise seems to demand now that I discuss the sin of the first man. But since Scripture has given an account of the making of the body of the woman without saying anything about her soul, I am more eager to look thoroughly into this question and ask how those writers can be refuted or not refuted who think that soul comes from human soul just as body comes from body, the seeds in both cases being passed on from parents to children.

Their position is that God made just one soul, which He breathed into the face of the man whom He had formed from the dust, so that all other human souls would be created from it, just as all other human bodies are created from the body of the first man. Their fundamental reason for holding this position is that Adam was made first, and then Eve. And Scripture tells us about the source of his body and the source of his soul; that is, his body is from the dust of the earth, and his soul is from the breath of God. But when it is said that Eve was made from Adam's rib, it is not said that God gave her life in a similar fashion by His breath, and the conclusion might be drawn that both her soul and body came from him who had already been given life. For, they say, either there should have been no mention of the soul of man, so that we would understand, or at least believe, according to our ability, that it was given by God; or, if Scripture was not silent for fear that we might suppose that the soul of the man as well as his body had been made from the earth, it ought not to have been silent with regard to the soul of the woman for fear it would be thought to be transmitted as an offshoot of Adam's, if that theory is not true. Therefore, they say, there is no mention of God's breathing into her face because as a matter of fact the soul of the woman came from the man.

2. It is easy to refute this opinion. For if they assume that the soul of the woman was made from the soul of the man on the ground that Scripture has not said that God breathed into the face of the woman, why do they think that the woman received life from the man, since that also is not mentioned in Scripture? Hence, if God makes all the souls of human beings coming into this world as He made the first one, Scripture was silent about the others because what is stated as having occurred in the first case could have been reasonably understood as applicable also to the others. Accordingly, if Scripture ought to have given us any instruction at all on this point, with much greater reason it should have done so if anything happened in the case of the woman that did not happen in the case of the man; which would certainly be true if her soul came from his animated flesh, and if she did not, like Adam, receive her body from one source and her soul from another.

Scripture, then, should have informed us of this difference so that we might not think that Eve's soul was made in the way that Adam's was made according to the scriptural narrative. Consequently, since it does not say that the soul of the woman was made from the soul of the man, it is reasonable to assume that the writer by this fact wished to admonish us to suppose nothing different in her case with regard to the soul than what we had learnt about the man, that is, that the woman received her soul in the same way. Had that not been true, there would have been an obvious occasion to state the fact, if not at the formation of Eve, at least later when Adam says, *This now is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*. How much more tender and loving it would have been if he had said, "and soul of my soul."

Nevertheless, these considerations have not solved this complicated question so as to bring me to adhere to one of these opinions as obvious and certain.

CHAPTER 2

A summary of previous investigations into the origin of Adam's soul

3. Hence, we must first see whether this book of Sacred Scripture, which we have commented on from the opening verse, permits us to doubt about this matter. Then

perhaps we shall be able to ask legitimately either what opinion we should choose to adopt or what restrictions we ought to observe in a matter that is uncertain.

Without doubt, on the sixth day God made man in His image; and in the same place in Scripture it is also said, *Male and female He made them*. In the foregoing discussions, where the image of God was mentioned, I took this as referring to the soul; but where the difference of sex was mentioned, I took this as referring to the body. Furthermore, the abundant and compelling evidence of Scripture in the texts which have been examined and discussed above would not allow me to understand that the man was formed from the slime of the earth and the woman from his side on the sixth day of creation; but it was clear that this was done later, after the original works of God in which He created all things together.

I sought, therefore, to discover what we should believe about the soul of the first man, and after I had examined every aspect of the question, the explanation that seemed probable and reasonable to me was that the soul of the man was made in the original works of creation but that the seminal reason of his body was placed in the corporeal world. Otherwise we should be forced to accept, against the testimony of Scripture, the conclusion that on the sixth day the whole work was done, that is, the man made from the slime of the earth and the woman from his side, or that in the works of the six days man was not made at all; or that it was the causal reason of the body only that was made and not any reason of the soul, although it is in his soul that man is the image of God; or again (and this position is not patently opposed to the words of Scripture, but it is strange and unacceptable) that it was in a spiritual creature created for this purpose alone that the reason-principle of the human soul was made, although the creature in which the reason-principle was alleged to have been made was not mentioned in the works of creation; or that it was in some creature mentioned in the works of creation that the reason-principle of the soul was made (as in men who are already in existence there is hidden the reason-principle of children to be procreated); and thus we should assume the soul to be the offspring of angels or (a still more intolerable hypothesis) the offspring of some corporeal element.

CHAPTER 3

Three hypotheses considered concerning the origin of human souls

4. But if it is now asserted that the first woman received her soul not from the man but like him from God who made it, on the ground that God creates an individual soul for each individual human being, then the soul of the woman was not made in the original works of creation. On the other hand, if a universal reason-principle of all souls had been created, as there is in men the reason-principle of procreation, we return to the strange and troublesome necessity of saying that human souls are the children either of angels or (worse yet!) of the corporeal heaven or even of some inferior element.

As a result, although the truth is hidden from us, we must consider what could be at least the most reasonable hypothesis to solve this problem. Is the origin of the soul to be explained as I have just now explained it? Or was there in the original works of creation only one soul created, that of the first man, so that all human souls would be created as the progeny of it? Or are new souls subsequently made without even a created causal principle preceding them in God's works of the six days? Of these three hypotheses, the first two do not contradict what Scripture says about the original works of creation, in which God created everything simultaneously. In one case (the second hypothesis) there was created in a creature, as in a parent, the reason-principle of soul so that all souls would be reproduced by it and be created by God when given to individual human beings, just as bodies come from parents. In the other case (the first hypothesis) it was not the reason-principle of the soul, like the reason-principle of offspring in the parent, but when day was made, the soul itself was created as was the day and heaven and earth and the lights of heaven. On either hypothesis, therefore, it is appropriate for Scripture to say, *God made man to His image*.

5. But it is not easy to see how the third hypothesis does not contradict the interpretation in which man is understood to have been made on the sixth day to the image of God and to have been visibly created after the seventh day. There is a difficulty in saying that new souls are made when neither they nor their reason-principle (like the reason-principle of

the offspring in the parent) were made on the sixth day along with the works, both finished and begun, from which God rested on the seventh day. If we hold such an opinion, we should take care that the lesson of Scripture be not lost when it carefully teaches us that God finished all His works in six days and made them very good, if He was to create further beings which He had not made in their own substances or causally in their reason-principles.

In this case we should understand that God has in Himself (although He has not placed it in any creature) the reason of all individual souls which are to be made and given to infants coming into the world. But since souls are not creatures of a different kind from that according to which man was made to the image of God on the sixth day, it is not correct to say that God makes a creature now which He did not then finish. For He made a soul then of the same nature as the souls He makes now, and it follows, therefore, that He does not now make some new kind of creature which He did not then create in the works He finished. This activity of God is not contrary to the causal reasons of future things which He originally laid away in the universe, but rather it is according to them. For in human bodies, whose continued propagation was provided from those first works down through the ages, it was fitting that there should be infused souls such as God now makes and infuses.

6. Consequently, no matter which one of the three interpretations will impress us as the most probable, we should remove all fear of seeming to hold an opinion inconsistent with the words of the Book of Genesis concerning the original creation of the six days. Let us, then, undertake a more thorough investigation of this question with God's help, and let us see if it is possible to find some solution—if not a luminously clear explanation beyond all doubt, at least an acceptable theory concerning the matter, which it will not be absurd to hold until further light will bring us to something certain. But if it is impossible to attain this goal because the weight of evidence is balanced on all sides, at least I shall not appear in my doubt to have avoided the labor of enquiry but only the excess of overconfident affirmation. In this way, I hope, he who has good reason to be certain of his

position will be kind enough to instruct me. On the other hand, if anyone is tenacious of his opinion, not because of the authority of God's word or the force of manifest reason, but because of his presumption, I hope he will not refuse to share my uncertainty.

CHAPTER 4

What is known about the soul. The need to follow the testimony of Scripture in considering the origin of the soul

7. First of all, let us hold it for certain that the substance of a soul cannot be turned into a bodily substance, so that what was soul becomes body; nor into an irrational soul, so that what was a human soul becomes the soul of a beast; nor into the Divine Substance, so that what was a soul becomes identified with God. So also, on the other hand, let us hold that neither body nor irrational soul nor the Divine Substance can be changed into a human soul. It must also be no less certain that the soul is a creature of God. Hence, if God made the human soul not from a body nor from an irrational soul nor from Himself, it follows that He makes it either from nothing or from some spiritual and, of course, rational creature.

But it is quite unreasonable to hope to demonstrate that something is made from nothing once the works were finished in which God created all things simultaneously, and I do not know if that theory can be proved with any clear evidence from the texts.

Furthermore, we should not be asked to explain what a man cannot even understand; or if one can understand it, I doubt if he could persuade anyone else except the sort of man who, without any other person attempting to instruct him, is himself able to understand this sort of thing. It is safer, therefore, not to treat these problems with human conjectures but to examine diligently the word of God

CHAPTER 5

The soul is not created from the angels or the elements or the substance of God

8. I can think of no text in the canonical books of Scripture to support the theory that God creates souls from angels functioning as parents, much less from the elements of the

corporeal world. However, one might cite the passage in the book of the prophet Ezekiel where the resurrection of the dead is described with the restoration of their bodies, when the breath from the four winds of heaven is summoned, and as it blows they are brought to life and rise up: *And the Lord said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord, From the four winds of heaven come and breathe upon these dead and let them live.'"* So I prophesied as the Lord commanded me, and the breath of life entered into them, and they came back to life and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host.

Here, it seems to me, these words foretold in prophetic language that men would rise up not only from the field where this action was portrayed but from all over the earth, and I think this was symbolized through the wind blowing from the four parts of the world. For the breath from the body of our Lord was not the substance of the Holy Spirit when He breathed and said, *Receive the Holy Spirit*, but by doing this He signified that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him as this breath proceeded from His body. But since the world is not united to God in the unity of a person as the body of Christ is united to the Word, the only begotten Son of God, we cannot say that the soul is from the substance of God as the breath is made from the four winds of the world. But I believe that the breath was one thing and that it signified another; and this can be clearly understood in the example of the breath proceeding from the body of our Lord. This interpretation is true even though the prophet Ezekiel in the passage cited foresaw, in a revelation given under figures, not the resurrection of the body as it will be one day, but the unexpected restoration of a people without hope through the Spirit of the Lord who has filled the whole world.

CHAPTER 6

Two theories on the origin of the soul examined in the light of Scripture

9. Let us, then, see which opinion is supported by the testimony of Scripture. Is it the one which asserts that God made one soul and gave it to the first man, later making the others from it, as He makes the other human bodies from the body of the first man? Or is it the one which asserts that He makes an individual soul for each individual man just as He did

for Adam, not making the other souls from Adam's?

What God says through the mouth of Isaiah, *I have made every breath* (and the words that follow show that He is speaking of the soul), can be explained according to either theory. For whether God makes souls from the one soul of the first man or from some origin beyond our knowledge, there is no doubt that He makes all souls.

10. In the Psalms it is written, *Who formed their hearts one by one*. Now, if by "hearts" we wish to understand "souls," this text does not contradict either of the two theories about which we are perplexed. For, on the one hand, if God forms souls from the one soul which He breathed into the face of the first man, He Himself certainly forms all individual souls just as He forms bodies. On the other hand, the same thing is true if He forms individual souls and sends them into bodies or if He forms them in the bodies into which He has sent them.

However, the text cited above from the Psalm, I believe, refers only to the fact that our souls are renewed and formed by grace to the image of God. Hence St. Paul says, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, but it is God's gift; it is not because of your works, so that no one may glory. For we are His work of art, created in Christ Jesus in good works*. We cannot, indeed, understand these words in the sense that our bodies have been created or formed through this grace of faith, but in the sense in which the Psalmist says, *Create in me a clean heart, O God*.

11. In the same sense, I believe, we must understand the text which says, *Who formed the spirit of man within him*, recognizing that it is one thing to send into a body a soul already made, and another thing to make it in man himself, that is, to remake and renew it. But even if we understand this not as referring to grace, in which we are renewed, but to nature, in which we are born, the text can be interpreted in accordance with either opinion. For in one interpretation God forms in man from the one soul of the first man that which is drawn like a seed of the soul to vivify the body; and in the other interpretation God forms the spirit of life not as the offspring of Adam's soul but infused

into the body from elsewhere, and He likewise fashions it in the senses of the mortal body so that man may become a living being.

CHAPTER 7

What theory on the origin of the soul is supported by Wisdom 8:19–20?

12. A more thorough consideration is needed of the text of the Book of Wisdom which says, *A good soul fell to my lot; and being good above the common, I came to a body undefiled*. This does, indeed, seem to support the theory which holds that souls are not generated from one soul but come from above into bodies.

However, what is the meaning of the statement, *A good soul fell to my lot*? Are we to imagine that in the fountainhead of souls, if there is such a thing, there are some souls that are good and some that are not, and that they go out by lot, each lot determining what soul is to be assigned to each man? Or does God make some good and others not good at the moment of conception or birth, so that each person has the kind of soul determined by his lot? It is strange if this text simply supports those who think that souls made elsewhere are sent individually by God into individual human bodies, and does not rather support those who say that souls are sent into bodies in accordance with the merits of the deeds they performed before entering bodies. Indeed, by what criterion can some good souls and some souls not good be thought to enter bodies unless it is by their deeds? It is not by their nature, for in it they are made by Him who makes all natures good. But far be it from us to contradict St. Paul, who says that those not yet born had done no good or evil, thus confirming the fact that it could not have been because of deeds but because of the One calling that it was said, *The elder shall serve the younger*, when there was question of the twins still in the womb of Rebecca.

Let us, then, put aside for a moment the text from the Book of Wisdom cited above. Indeed, we ought not to overlook, whether they are right or wrong, those who think that those words were spoken particularly and exclusively about the soul of the Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. But if necessary, we shall consider the meaning of the text later, so that if it cannot be applied to Christ, we may investigate to

see how we ought to understand it, in order that we may not find ourselves contradicting the faith as handed down by St. Paul, thinking that souls have some merits for their deeds before they begin life in the body.

CHAPTER 8

What theory on the origin of the soul is supported by Psalm 103:29–30?

13. Now let us see in what sense Scripture has said, *Thou wilt take away their spirit, and they will fail and return to their dust. Thou wilt send forth Thy spirit, and they will be created, and Thou wilt renew the face of the earth.*

This text seems to support the opinion of those who think that souls are created from parents as bodies are, since the Psalmist is understood as having said *their spirit* on the ground that it has come to man from man. When men die, this spirit cannot be restored to them by men so as to make the dead rise again, because it is not received a second time from parents as it originally was at birth; but it will be restored by God, who raises the dead. Hence, the Psalmist calls the same spirit *their spirit* when they die and *the spirit of God* when they rise.

But those who hold that souls come not from parents but from God who sends them are able to interpret the text in keeping with their theory by understanding that the Psalmist has said *their spirit* when men are dying because it was in them and went forth from them, and that he has said *the spirit of God* when they rise because it is sent by Him and restored by Him. Consequently, this text does not refute either theory.

14. For my part, I think that this text is better understood as referring to the grace of God by which we are interiorly renewed. For in the case of all men who are proud, living their lives according to the earthly man and presuming on their emptiness, their own spirit is, in a sense, cast off when they divest themselves of the old man and become weak so that they may be made perfect by driving pride out, saying to the Lord in humble confession, *Remember that we are dust.* Indeed, to them it had been said, *How can he who is dust and ashes be proud?* For through the eye of faith, looking on the justice of God, so that they

may not desire to establish their own justice, they despise themselves, as Job says, and melt away and consider themselves as dust and ashes. This is what is meant by the statement, *And they will return to their dust*. But when they receive the Spirit of God, they say, *It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*. Thus, the face of the earth is renewed by the multitude of the saints through the grace of the New Testament.

CHAPTER 9

What theory on the origin of the soul is supported by Ecclesiastes 12:7?

15. The text in Ecclesiastes, *...and before the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit goes back to God who gave it*, does not support one theory more than the other but is compatible with either. The advocates of one theory can say that this proves that the soul is given not by the parents but by God, because when the dust, that is, the flesh which was made of dust, has returned to its earth, the spirit will return to God who gave it. Those on the other side reply: “You are certainly right. The spirit returns to God, who gave it to the first man when He breathed into his face, and the dust, that is, the human body, returns to the earth from which it was originally made.” For the spirit was not destined to return to the parents, even though it may have been created from the one spirit which was given to the first man, any more than the body after death returns to the parents, although it is certainly obvious that it was begotten by them.

Just as the body, therefore, does not return to the human beings by whom it was made but to the earth from which it was formed for the first man, so the spirit does not return to the parents by whom it has been transmitted but to God by whom it was given to the first human body.

16. The text cited above, then, clearly teaches us that God made from nothing the soul which He gave to the first man, and did not form it from some creature already made, as in the case of the body made from the earth. Hence, when the soul returns, it can only return to the Author of its being who gave it, not to some creature from which it was made, as the body to the earth. For there is no creature from which it was made, because

it was made from nothing; and hence, in returning it returns to its Maker, by whom it was made from nothing. Not all indeed return, since there are those of whom it is said, *a wind that goes and returns not*.

CHAPTER 10

It is difficult to determine the origin of the soul on the basis of Scripture

17. It is difficult, then, to collect all the texts of Holy Scripture touching this matter; and if it could be done, we should have to write a very long treatise in order to cite the passages and discuss them. But unless this would produce evidence as certain as the evidence which shows that God made the soul or that He gave it to the first man, I do not know how this question could be solved by the testimony of the sacred text. For if Scripture had said that God breathed into the face of the woman He made, just as He had done with the man, and that she was made a living being, this would throw considerable light on the question and would lead us to believe that the soul given to each newly-formed body is not from the parents. Nevertheless, we should still want to know what exactly would take place in the generation of offspring, for this is the ordinary way in which human beings spring from human beings. The first woman, indeed, was formed in a different way, and therefore it could still be maintained that Eve did not receive her soul from Adam for the reason that she was not born as a child from him. But if Scripture were to say that the first child born to them did not have a soul transmitted from his parents but rather given to him by God, then we should have to believe that others receive their souls in the same way even though Scripture is silent on this point.

CHAPTER 11

Is St. Paul's statement in Romans 5:12, 18–19 compatible with either theory on the origin of the soul?

18. Now let us consider another text and see if it proves neither of the two theories but is capable of being reconciled with both. St. Paul says, *Through one man sin came into this world, and through sin death, and so death spread to all men, in whom all have sinned*.

And farther on, Just as through one man's transgression all men were condemned, so also through the justice of One all men receive acquittal and life. For just as by one man's disobedience many have been made sinners, so by one Man's obedience many are made just. On the basis of these words of St. Paul, those who hold the propagation of souls by generation attempt to prove their position in the following manner. If sin and sinner can be understood solely in relation to the body (so their argument runs), we are not required by these words of St. Paul to believe that the soul is from the parents. But if it is the soul only that sins, although it is attracted by the allurements of the body, how must we understand the statement *in whom all have sinned* if the soul has not descended from Adam as the body has? Or how have men been made sinners through Adam's disobedience if they were in him with respect to the body only and not with respect to the soul?

19. We must be on our guard, indeed, against errors that may be implied in holding that the soul does not descend from Adam's soul. For instance, we must not make God seem to be the author of sin if He gives the soul to a body in which it must necessarily sin. Again, we must not believe that there can be a soul—apart from the soul of Christ—for which the grace of Christ is not necessary for it to be freed from sin on the ground that it did not sin in Adam if it is said that all sinned in him according to the body only, which comes from Adam, and not also according to the soul. This position is obviously contrary to the faith of the Church, for parents take even their small children and infants and rush with them to receive the grace of holy baptism. Now, if the bond of sin which is loosed in them is a bond of the flesh only and not also of the soul, one could rightly ask what harm they would suffer if they went forth from the body at that early age without baptism. For if this sacrament is for the good of their bodies and not of their souls, they ought to be baptized even when dead. But since the universal Church holds to the custom of rushing to the sacrament with living infants to provide for them, fearing that when they die nothing can be done to help them, there is only one explanation, namely, each child is Adam in body and soul, and therefore the grace of Christ is necessary for him. At that age the infant in his own person has done no good or evil, and thus his soul is perfectly

innocent if it has not descended from Adam. Consequently, it will be an extraordinary achievement if the person who holds that the soul has not descended from Adam's soul is able to show how the soul of an infant can be justly condemned if it goes forth from the body without baptism!

CHAPTER 12

The cause of carnal desire is not in the flesh alone but also in the soul

20. The testimony of Scripture is certainly true when it says, *The desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and those of the spirit against the flesh*. Nevertheless, I am convinced that no one, learned or ignorant, questions the fact that the flesh can have no desires without the soul. Consequently, the cause of carnal concupiscence is not in the soul alone, much less in the flesh alone. It comes from both sources: from the soul, because without it no pleasure is felt; from the flesh, because without it carnal pleasure is not felt. Hence, when St. Paul speaks of the desires of the flesh against the spirit, he undoubtedly means the carnal pleasure which the spirit experiences from the flesh and with the flesh as opposed to the pleasure which the spirit alone experiences. It is the spirit alone indeed, if I am not mistaken, that has a desire unmixed with carnal pleasure or any craving for carnal things, when it longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. The spirit alone experiences also that desire about which it is said to it, *You have desired wisdom; keep the commandment, and the Lord will give it to you*. For when the spirit commands the members of the body to be at the service of this desire with which the spirit alone is enkindled—for example, when one takes up a book, or when one writes, reads, discusses, listens, or when one feeds the hungry, and when other good deeds are done out of human kindness and pity—the flesh obeys, and it does not stir up concupiscence. When these and similar good desires, which the soul alone seeks, are opposed by something which delights the same soul according to the flesh, then it is said that *The desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and those of the spirit against the flesh*.

21. In this connection “the flesh” is spoken of when the soul acts according to it, for example, when one says, “The flesh desires.” In the same way we say, “The ear hears”

and “The eye sees,” but everyone knows that it is the soul that hears by means of the ear and sees by means of the eye. By the same usage we say that your hand helps a man when you put forth your hand and give something to help another. And it is with reference to the eye of faith, to which it belongs to believe what is not seen through the flesh, that Scripture says, *All flesh will see the salvation of God*. But it is surely with reference to the soul alone, by which the flesh lives, that this was said; for even to look piously through the eyes of the flesh upon Christ, that is, upon the form which He assumed for our sake, does not belong to concupiscence (and one should guard against understanding the text, *All flesh will see the salvation of God*, in this sense) but to the ministry of the flesh. It is more properly said that the flesh desires when the soul not only gives animal life to the flesh but also desires something according to the flesh. It is not in the soul’s power to be rid of these desires so long as there is sin in the members, that is, a strong allurements of the flesh in this body of death, resulting from the punishment for the sin in which we are born, by which before grace all are sons of wrath. Against this sin those who are placed under grace carry on a war, not with the hope that sin will no longer be in their body as long as it is mortal—when it is rightly called dead—but with the hope that it will not reign. And sin does not reign when its desires are not obeyed, that is, the cravings by which it lusts after allurements according to the flesh against the spirit. Hence, St. Paul did not say, “Let not sin be in your mortal body” (for he knew that the attraction of sin, which he calls sin, is there since our nature has been corrupted by the original transgression); but he said, *Let not sin reign in your mortal body to make you obey its lusts; do not yield your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin*.

CHAPTER 13

The Manichean doctrine of two natures and two wills in man rejected. The sins of children

22. In this interpretation I avoid saying that the flesh has desires without the soul (an absurd position), and I also avoid agreeing with the Manichees, who saw that the flesh could not have desires without the soul and hence assumed that it has another soul within

it, having its origin in a nature opposed to God, whence it lusts against the spirit.

Moreover, I am not forced to say that there is some soul for which the grace of Christ is not necessary when someone says to me: “What blame has the soul of an infant deserved that it should be dangerous for it to depart from the body without receiving the sacrament of baptism, if on the one hand it has not committed any sin of its own and on the other has not descended from the first soul which sinned in Adam?”

23. I am not talking about children in their late childhood. There are some people, it is true, who are unwilling to impute personal sin to children before the beginning of puberty in their fourteenth year. I could see good reason to believe this if there were no sins except those that have to do with the genital organs. But who would dare assert that thefts, lies, and false oaths are not sins except one who wishes to commit such sins with impunity? Yet these sins are common in childhood, although it seems that they should not be punished in children as severely as in adults, because one hopes that with the passing years, as reason begins to take hold, these children will be able to understand better the precepts pertaining to salvation and to give them willing obedience. But I am not now talking about children who summon every effort they can by word and deed to attack truth and justice when they are opposed to their carnal and childish pleasure of body or soul. And what is in the minds of these children except the thought of the falsehood and sin which seems ready to aid them in obtaining what attracts them or avoiding what repels them? But I am speaking of infants—not because they are frequently born of adulterous parents, for we ought not to find the gifts of nature in the child worthy of blame because of the sins of the parents. Similarly, we cannot say that the grain ought not to ripen because it was sown by the hand of a thief; or that the sin of parents is going to plague their lives if they turn to God and mend their ways; and much less that it will plague their children if these children lead upright lives.

CHAPTER 14

Traducianism considered in the light of original sin and the practice of infant baptism

But the age that poses a puzzling problem is that of infancy, when the soul has committed no sin of its own free will. How can the infant's soul be justified through the obedience of one Man if it is not guilty through the disobedience of another one man? This is the objection of those who say that human souls are created by human parents, not without the action of the Creator, to be sure, but in a manner similar to that in which bodies are created. For it is not the parents who create the bodies but rather He who said, *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.*

24. Others reply to this by saying that God gives new souls individually to human bodies so that, in spite of their being in sinful flesh coming from original sin, they may live upright lives and, with the grace of God, bring carnal concupiscence under control, and thus gain merit whereby they may be transformed to a better state with these very bodies at the time of the resurrection and may live in Christ with the angels forever.

But since souls are mysteriously united to earthly and mortal members, especially members propagated by sinful flesh, they say that to be able first to give the body life and afterwards, with its coming of age, to rule it, these souls must be overcome by a state of forgetfulness. If this condition were irreversible, God the Creator would be considered responsible. But the soul, gradually recovering from this listless state of forgetfulness, according to this theory, is able, first by the devout affection of its conversion and then by its perseverance in keeping the commandments, to turn to its God and to merit His mercy and truth. What harm, then, comes to it from being plunged into a kind of sleep for a short time when it can gradually awaken to the light of intelligence, for which the rational soul has been made, and through a good will choose a good life? But this it will not be able to do unless it will be aided by the grace of God conferred through the Mediator. If a man neglects this aid, he will be Adam not only according to the flesh but also according to the spirit. If he is solicitous about his state, he will be Adam according to the flesh only; but living a holy life according to the spirit, even the flesh which he inherited from Adam tainted by sin he will deserve to receive back purified from the stain of sin by that transformation which the resurrection promises to the saints.

25. But before he attains the age at which he can live according to the spirit, he must

have the sacrament of the Mediator so that what he cannot yet do by his faith may be done for him by the faith of those who love him. By this sacrament, indeed, the penalty of original sin is wiped out even in the age of infancy; but unless one is helped by this sacrament, one will not gain control over carnal concupiscence even as a young adult. Furthermore, when this concupiscence is mastered, he will not obtain the merit of eternal life except by the grace of Him whom he seeks to win. Hence, even an infant as long as he is alive should be baptized so that the union with sinful flesh may not harm his soul. For by reason of this association the soul of an infant cannot be wise according to the spirit. Indeed, this condition weighs the soul down even when it leaves the body, unless while in the body it is purified through the one and only Sacrifice of the true Priest.

CHAPTER 15

Why is it necessary for infants to be baptized?

26. What happens, then, someone will say, if the parents or relatives out of unbelief or negligence fail to have the infant baptized? The same question, indeed, can be asked about adults. For they can die suddenly, or they can be sick in a home where no one will see that they are baptized. But the adults, they say, have also their own personal sins which need forgiveness; and if they are not forgiven, no one can rightly say that they are punished unjustly for the deeds which they wilfully committed during their lives.

But the soul of an infant is a different matter. Its contamination by contact with sinful flesh can in no way be imputed to it if it was not created from the first soul of Adam who sinned. For it was not by any sin but rather by nature that it was so made, and by God's gift that it was given to the body. Why, then, will it be excluded from eternal life if no one will be moved to see that the infant is baptized? Shall we say that the infant will suffer no harm? What, then, is the advantage for the one who is baptized if there is no harm done to the one who is not baptized?

27. I should like to hear what these have to say for their position who take Holy Scripture into account, either finding evidence in it for their opinion or finding that it does not contradict their interpretation, and who try to maintain that new souls not

inherited from the parents are given to bodies. I must confess that I have not yet heard or read anywhere their explanation of the problem.

But I should not on that account desert the position of those who are absent if I find something that seems to support it. For they can also say that God foreknows how each soul would live if it were to have a longer life in the body, and thus He provides the ministration of the saving waters for each one who He knows would have lived in a holy manner when he would come to an age at which he could believe, if it were now necessary for him to meet an early death by some hidden cause.

It is, then, a mystery beyond human powers of knowing, at least beyond mine, why an infant destined to die immediately or soon after birth is born. This is so mysterious that it can help neither of the two sides whose opinions we are discussing. For we have rejected the opinion which holds that souls are cast into bodies in accordance with the merits of a previous life, so that a soul which had not committed many sins would apparently deserve to be delivered the sooner. We rejected this theory so as not to contradict St. Paul, who testifies that those who are not yet born have done no good or evil. Hence, neither those who maintain the transmission of the soul nor those who hold that individual new souls are given to individual bodies are able to show why some die early and others die late. The reason, therefore, is hidden, and so far as I can see it does not support or oppose either opinion.

CHAPTER 16

Further reflections on the need of baptism of infants

28. Certain writers, when pressed on the subject of the death of infants and when asked why the sacrament of baptism is necessary for all human beings, whose souls have not come from the soul of him by whose disobedience many have been made sinners, reply that all have been made sinners according to the flesh, but according to the soul those only who have lived an evil life during the time when they might have lived a good one. Moreover, they say that all souls, including those of infants, must receive the sacrament of baptism, without which even infants ought not to depart this life, because the

contamination of sin, coming from sinful flesh and infecting the soul when it enters the body, will be the ruin of the soul after death unless it is purified by the sacrament of the Mediator while still in the flesh. Thus, they say, this remedy is provided by Divine Providence for any soul which God foreknew would have lived a holy life if it were to live in this world to the age when it could make an act of faith, but which for reasons known to Him alone He wished to be born in a body and which He then without delay took from the body.

When this is their reply, what can be said against them except that we are made uncertain of the salvation of those who after a good life have died peacefully in the Church if each one is to be judged not only according to the life he lived but also according to that which he would have lived if he had been able to live longer? Indeed, in this theory souls are accountable before God not only for past sins but also for future sins, and death does not free them from guilt if it takes them before the sins are committed, nor is any benefit bestowed upon him who was caught up lest evil change his understanding. For why is God, knowing this future wickedness as He does, not going to judge man according to it if He came to the aid of an infant who was going to die and provided that the taint of impurity from the sinful body would not harm it and thus decided to give it salvation through baptism because He foreknew that this infant, if it were to live, would have lived a good and faithful life?

29. Can this argument be rejected because it is mine? But perhaps those who maintain that they are certain of this opinion bring forth other texts of Scripture or proofs from reason to remove this ambiguity or at least to show that their theory is not contradicted by the statements of St. Paul, when with considerable emphasis he tells us of the grace by which we are saved, saying, *As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive*; and, *As by one man's disobedience many have been made sinners, so by one Man's obedience many will be made just*. By the many sinners referred to, St. Paul meant all men without exception, and hence just before this, speaking of Adam, he said, *in whom all have sinned*. That the souls of infants cannot be separated from these, since St. Paul says "all" and also since they are saved by baptism, this is understandably the position of

those who think that souls are transmitted from the soul of Adam, unless they are refuted by some clear argument from reason that does not contradict Holy Scripture or by some positive testimony of Scripture itself.

CHAPTER 17

The meaning of Wisdom 8:19–20

30. Let us examine, then, as far as the scope of this work allows, the meaning of the text which we quoted and then put aside a short time ago. The author of the Book of Wisdom has written, *As a child I was well endowed, and a good soul fell to my lot; and being good above the common, I came to a body undefiled.*

This text seems to support those who hold that souls are not created from the souls of parents but come or descend to the body when God sends them. But it is also opposed to their theory in so far as it says, *A good soul fell to my lot*, since they undoubtedly believe that souls trickle, as it were, like brooks from one spring, or that the souls which God sends into bodies are made equal by nature and that there are not some good or better and others not good or less good. For on what basis are souls good or better, or on the other hand not good or less good, except by their manner of life adopted by the free choice of the will or by variations in the disposition of their bodies, since some are more weighed down, some less, by the body, which is corrupted and burdensome to the soul? But there was no action of individual souls by which their manner of life could be distinguished before they came into bodies; and it could not have been because of a body less burdensome that the author declared his soul good when he said, *A good soul fell to my lot; and being good above the common, I came to a body undefiled.* For he says that he came to the goodness by which he was good, obtaining by lot a good soul, so that he also came to a body undefiled. He was good, therefore, from another source before coming to the body, but certainly not because of a difference in his way of life, since there is no merit for deeds in a previous life; nor because of a difference in his body, since he was good before entering the body. What, then, was the source of the difference?

31. This text, in so far as it says, *I came to a body*, does not seem favorable to those who

maintain that souls are created as offshoots of the soul that first sinned; but for the rest it fits that theory, since after the author has said, *As a child I was well endowed*, explaining the reason why he was well endowed, he immediately adds, *And a good soul fell to my lot*, that is, from the character or the well-balanced bodily disposition of his father. Then he says, *Being good above the common, I came to a body undefiled*; and if this is understood as referring to his mother's body, the statement, *I came to a body*, will not be in opposition to that opinion when he is understood to have come from his father's soul and body to his mother's undefiled body. Defilement in this connection would be either from menstrual blood, which they say oppresses the natural endowment of the infant, or from the contamination of an adulterous union. Hence, the words of the Book of Wisdom are more favorable to those who speak of the soul as an offshoot of Adam's soul; or if the other side can explain them in keeping with their theory, this text leaves the question open.

CHAPTER 18

The soul of Christ. Is it possible to apply Wisdom 8:19–20 to Christ?

32. If we wish to apply these words from the Book of Wisdom to our Lord according to the created human nature assumed by the Word, there are some details in the context which are inconsistent with His perfection. This is especially true of the fact that the one who is speaking in this book, shortly before he said these words which we are now discussing, confessed that he was compacted with blood, from the seed of a man. Now, this manner of birth is irreconcilable with the birth from the Virgin, who did not conceive the body of Christ from the seed of man, as every Christian holds without any doubt.

But there are also the words of Christ in the Psalms where He says, *They have pierced My hands and feet; they have numbered all My bones. And they have looked and stared upon Me. They have divided My garments among them, and upon My vesture they have cast lots*. These words belong properly to Christ alone. But earlier in the same Psalm He says, *O God, My God, look upon Me. Why hast Thou forsaken Me? Far from My salvation are the words of My sins*. Now this does not properly belong to Christ except in

so far as He transfigures in Himself the lowly condition of our body, since we are members of His body.

Furthermore, in the Gospel it is said, *The Child advanced in years and wisdom*. Hence, if the words which we read preceding the text we are discussing in the Book of Wisdom can be applied to the Lord Himself in view of the lowly form of servant that was His and the union of the body of the Church with its Head, who could be more richly endowed than the Child whose wisdom at the age of twelve was admired by the elders? And what could be more excellent than the soul of Christ?

But even if the advocates of traducianism prevail, not by contentious argumentation but by proofs, it will not follow that we must believe that the soul of Christ has also come by generation from the soul of Adam, for we cannot suppose that our Lord Himself is made a sinner through the disobedience of the first man when through the obedience of Christ alone many are freed from guilt and made just. And what more undefiled than the womb of the Virgin, whose flesh, although it came from procreation tainted by sin, nevertheless did not conceive from that source? Consequently, not even the body of Christ was planted in the womb of Mary in accordance with that law which, placed in the members of the body of death, is at war with the law of the mind. The holy patriarchs restrained with marriage this law of sin, not relaxing their restraint until intercourse was allowed; nevertheless, even when it was allowed they felt the force of this law.

Hence, although the body of Christ was taken from the flesh of a woman who had been conceived from the flesh of a sinful race, nevertheless, since it was not conceived in her womb in the manner in which she had been conceived, it was not sinful flesh but the likeness of sinful flesh. For He did not thereby contract the guilt that brings death, manifesting itself by involuntary motions of the flesh which must be conquered by the will and against which the spirit has its desires. But He received a body immune to the contagion of sin, a body which would be able to pay the debt to death that He did not owe and to show forth the promised resurrection, thus taking fear from us and giving us hope.

33. Finally, if I am asked from what source Jesus Christ received His soul, I should prefer to hear the opinions of better and more learned men; but as far as I can grasp the

matter, I should respond that it was from the source whence Adam received his, rather than from Adam's own soul. For if dust taken from the earth on which no man had worked was worthy of being animated by the power of God, how much more fittingly did the body taken from the flesh on which no man had worked receive by lot a good soul. In the first case, he who was to fall would be raised up; and in the second, He who would lift the other up would descend to earth. And perhaps He said, *A good soul fell to my lot* if this ought to be applied to our Lord, because what is given by lot is given by God; or perhaps, in conformity with our faith, it was to keep us from thinking that even the soul of Christ was raised to such excellence by any previous deeds meriting that the Word should become flesh with it and dwell among us, and thus the word "lot" was used to remove any suspicion of antecedent merits.

CHAPTER 19

The soul of Christ was not in the loins of Abraham, and hence it was not transmitted from the soul of Adam

34. In the epistle which is called "To the Hebrews," there is a passage that merits our careful consideration. For through Melchizedek, in whom there was a figure of the future reality, the author of the Epistle distinguished the priesthood of Christ from that of Levi when he said: *Consider how great this man is to whom even Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth part of the choicest of the spoils. And those who are from the sons of Levi, receiving the priestly office, have a commandment according to the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also have come from the loins of Abraham. But this man, who has not the same descent, received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. Now it is beyond all dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. And here, indeed, mortal men receive tithes, but there it is one who testifies that he lives. And, as it is right to say it, Levi also, though receiving tithes, paid tithes through Abraham. For he was still in the loins of his father.*

If this tribute, therefore, after so long a time can show how great was the priesthood of Christ compared to that of Levi, because Christ the Priest was prefigured by

Melchizedek, who imposed a tithe on Abraham, and through Abraham also on Levi, he surely imposed no tithe on Christ. But if Levi had to pay the tithe because he was in the loins of Abraham, Christ did not have to pay a tithe precisely because He was not in the loins of Abraham. If we understand, however, that Levi was in Abraham not according to the soul but only according to the flesh, Christ was there also, because Christ too was from the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and the tithe, therefore, was imposed on Him.

What, then, is significant about the marked distinction between the priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of Levi on the basis of the fact that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek since he was in the loins of Abraham? Christ was there also, and hence they both paid tithes. But the point is that we must understand that Christ was not there in a certain sense. Yet who would deny that He was there according to the flesh? Therefore, it was according to the soul that He was not there. The soul of Christ, therefore, was not transmitted from the soul of Adam who sinned; otherwise it also would have been there.

CHAPTER 20

Even if traducianism is true, the soul of Christ was not transmitted from the soul of Adam

35. At this point the defenders of traducianism come forth and say that their theory has been established if it is clear that Levi, even according to the soul, was in the loins of Abraham, in whose person he paid tithes to Melchizedek, so that the case of Christ can be distinguished from his in the matter of the tithes. For Christ did not pay tithes, and yet He was in the loins of Abraham according to the flesh, and so it follows that He was not there according to the soul. Hence, the conclusion is that Levi was there according to the soul.

This does not trouble me, for I am more willing to continue listening to arguments on both sides than to establish one of the two theories at this time. Meanwhile, it was my wish with this evidence from Scripture to show that the soul of Christ was not generated from the original human soul. Others will perhaps find what they must say about the rest

of human souls. They may say, and this argument has some weight with me, that although no man's soul is in the loins of his father, nevertheless, Levi, being in the loins of Abraham according to the flesh, paid tithes; and Christ, being there according to the flesh, did not pay tithes.

Now, Levi was there according to the seminal reason by which he was destined to enter his mother on the occasion of carnal union; but not by such a reason was the flesh of Christ there, although the flesh of Mary was there according to such a reason. Therefore, neither Levi nor Christ was in the loins of Abraham according to the soul. According to the flesh, however, both Levi and Christ were there; but Levi according to carnal concupiscence, Christ solely according to His corporeal substance. Since in a seed there are both the visible corporeal germ and the invisible formative principle, both of these came from Abraham, or even from Adam, to the body of Mary, which was conceived and born in that manner. Christ, however, assumed the visible substance of the flesh from the flesh of the Virgin; the formative principle of His conception, however, was not from the seed of a man, but it came from above in a far different way. Consequently, in respect of what He received from His mother, He was also in the loins of Abraham.

36. Levi paid tithes, therefore, in Abraham, since he was in Abraham's loins, although it was according to the flesh alone, just as Abraham himself was in his father's loins. In other words, he was born of his father Abraham as Abraham was born of his father, namely, through the law in the members at war with the law of the mind and through an invisible concupiscence, although the chaste and honorable rights of marriage do not allow that law of the members to prevail except in so far as they can provide for the continuation of the race through it.

But tithes were not paid through Abraham by Him whose flesh received from that source not a festering wound but the material that would heal. For since this tithing belonged to the foreshadowing of the remedy, tithes were paid in the flesh of Abraham by him who was healed, not by Him who was the source of the healing. For the same flesh not only of Abraham but also of the first and earthly man had both the wound of sin and the remedy for that wound, the wound of sin in the law of the members at war with that of the mind,

a law transmitted thence by a seminal reason to all generations of descendants, and at the same time the remedy of the wound in the body taken from the Virgin, from which source alone came the corporeal matter, without the working of concupiscence, but through a divine causal principle of conception and formation, for the purpose of sharing with men the necessity of dying without any taint of sin, and of giving them the hope of resurrection without any fear of disappointment.

Therefore, it is my opinion that even those who defend the traducianist theory agree that the soul of Christ is not an offshoot of the soul of the first man who sinned. For they hold that the seed of the soul is passed on by the seed of the father in intercourse, but the manner of Christ's conception was totally different. They maintain also that if He had been in Abraham according to the soul, He also would have paid tithes. But Scripture attests that He did not pay tithes inasmuch as it distinguishes His priesthood from that of Levi on this very ground.

CHAPTER 21

Whatever theory is proposed about the origin of the soul of Christ, there cannot be any question of a taint of original sin on His soul

37. Someone may perhaps say, just as Christ could have been in the loins of Abraham according to the flesh and not have paid tithes, why could He not also have been there according to the soul without paying tithes? The answer is, because the simple substance of the soul does not grow larger when the body grows larger, even in the opinion of those who suppose it to be a body, an opinion held especially by those who think that the soul comes from the parents. Hence, in a corporeal seed there can be an unseen power which acts in an immaterial way to regulate the development of a being. This power cannot be seen by the eyes, but only by the intellect, as distinct from the matter perceived by sight and touch. The very size of the human body, which is incomparably greater than the tiny seed, makes it quite evident that some other matter can be taken into it that does not have the seminal force but only bodily substance. It was this bodily substance that was assumed by the power of God to form the body of Christ without any human generation

by carnal union. But who would dare to say that the soul has both, namely, the visible matter of the seed and the hidden formative principle of the seed?

But why should I labor over a theory which I suppose cannot be made convincing by words to anyone except the person who has the kind of penetrating mind that can quickly grasp an attempted explanation without waiting to hear it to the end? Hence, I shall sum up the argument briefly. If the soul of Christ could have come from another soul, and I assume that the reader understood what I said about generation when speaking of the body, the soul of Christ is from the original soul only on the condition that it has not contracted the taint of sin; but if it could not be from that source without the guilt of sin, it has not come from that soul.

With regard to the origin of other souls, whether they are from their parents or directly from God, let that side prevail which can. I am still hesitant and wavering between the two theories, now on one side, now on the other. But there is one thing I cannot believe, and that is that the soul is a body or any kind of corporeal quality or arrangement, if you want to use that word to designate what the Greeks call *ἄρμυνία*, and I trust that with God's help in my speculations I shall never accept such a theory, no matter who chatters such nonsense.

CHAPTER 22

The doubt about the origin of the soul cannot be solved by the words of our Lord in John 3:6

38. There is another text of some importance which can be cited for their opinion by those who hold that souls come from above, namely, the text in which our Lord says, *What is born of flesh is flesh; what is born of spirit is spirit.* What is more explicit, they say, than this statement to prove that the soul cannot be born of the flesh? For what else is the soul than the spirit of life, a created spirit, to be sure, not the Creator?

But in answer the advocates of the other opinion reply, "What else do we hold when we say that the flesh is from the flesh and the soul from the soul?" For man is made of both, and we hold that both come from him, the flesh from the flesh that acts, the spirit from

the spirit that desires. Moreover, it should be noted that the Lord was speaking not of carnal generation but of spiritual regeneration.

CHAPTER 23

It is difficult to decide on the correct explanation of the origin of the soul. The practice of infant baptism

39. After pursuing this investigation as thoroughly as time has allowed, I should judge the weight of reason and of scriptural texts to be equal or nearly equal on both sides, were it not for the fact that the practice of infant baptism gives greater weight to the opinion of those who hold that souls are generated by parents. What can be said of these arguments is not yet clear to me. If at a later date God gives me some solution and the opportunity to write something for the benefit of those interested, I shall not be reluctant to do so.

Now, however, I want to state in advance that the argument from the baptism of infants is not to be so despised that we should neglect to refute it if the truth is against it. We have two alternatives. On the one hand, we can say that no investigation must be made into this matter, so that we shall be satisfied to know by our faith where we are destined to go if we live a holy life, although we may not know where we have come from. On the other hand, if the rational soul is not arrogant in its search for this knowledge about itself, let it put aside obstinate debate and give itself to diligent enquiry, humble seeking, and perseverance in knocking at the door. Thus, if He knows that this is good for us who certainly knows better than we what is for our good, let Him grant this also, for He gives good gifts to His children.

But the custom of our mother the Church in the matter of infant baptism is by no means to be scorned, nor to be considered at all superfluous, nor to be believed except on the ground that it is a tradition from the apostles. The age of infancy, indeed, in spite of its smallness, bears witness of great weight, for it was the first to have merited to shed its blood for Christ.

CHAPTER 24

Those who hold the traducianist theory must be careful not to think of the soul as corporeal

40. I earnestly beg those who have accepted the traducianist theory and hold that souls are generated by parents, to make every effort to reflect on themselves and to understand that their souls are not bodies. If we but consider the soul seriously, there is no other being that can so help us to think of God, who remains immutable above all His creation, and to recognize Him as immaterial, as the soul, which has been made to His image. On the contrary, there is nothing more likely, or perhaps nothing more logical, than that God should be thought of as a body once the soul is thought of as a body. Thus, constantly immersed in the corporeal and living the life of the senses, people are unwilling to think that the soul is anything other than a body, for they fear that if it is not a body it may be nothing. Consequently, they are all the more afraid to think that God is not a body in proportion as they fear to think that God is nothing.

Thus they are taken up with images or phantasms of images which the cogitative power forms from familiarity with bodies, and as a result without these images and phantasms they fear they must perish in a void. Hence, it is necessary for them to paint, as it were, a picture of justice and wisdom in their minds with shapes and colors, for they cannot think of them as incorporeal. But when they are moved by justice or wisdom to praise these virtues or to do some deed in accordance with them, they cannot say what color or size, what features or shapes they have seen.

I have spoken of this matter at length elsewhere; and, God willing, I shall speak of it again when necessary. But as I said above, if some persons have no doubt that souls are generated by parents, or if some are doubtful as to whether or not this is so, let them not dare to think or to say that the soul is a body. It is important to avoid this, as I have said, so that they may not think that God Himself is nothing else than a body, a body of the utmost perfection, having His own proper nature surpassing all other bodies, but a body none the less.

CHAPTER 25

Tertullian's view of the soul. Visual images representing immaterial reality

41. Tertullian thought the soul was corporeal simply because he was unable to think of it as incorporeal, and hence he feared that it would be nothing if it were not a body. He also was unable to think of God in any but material terms. But since he was intelligent, he sometimes saw the truth and rose above his ordinary way of thinking. For what could have been truer than what he says in one of his works, "Every corporeal being is capable of suffering"? Consequently, he had to change the opinion that he had previously adopted when he said that even God was a body. Indeed, I do not think that he was so out of his mind as to believe that God was capable of suffering, so that Christ not in body only, or in body and soul, but in the Word through whom all things were made would be thought of as capable of suffering and subject to change. May such thoughts be far from the mind of a Christian.

Furthermore, when Tertullian gave the soul a color like air and light, he turned to the senses and tried to furnish the soul with the various sense organs as if it were a body. He said, "This, the soul molded into the shape of the body, is the interior man, the other is exterior. They are two, but they form one being. The interior man also has his eyes and ears by which the people must have heard and seen the Lord. He also has the other members which he uses in his thoughts and employs in his dreams."

42. Notice the kind of ears and eyes with which the people had to hear and see God and which the soul employs in dreams. And yet, if anyone were to see Tertullian himself in a dream, he would never say that Tertullian had seen him and that they had conversed together, since Tertullian in his dreams had not seen him. Finally, if the soul sees itself in dreams while the body lies in one place and the soul wanders through various images seen by it, who has ever seen it with color like air and light in his dreams, except perhaps along with the other objects seen with an equally false appearance? For the soul can see images like this, but God forbid that when it awakes it should believe that it is like what it saw in the dream. Otherwise, when it sees itself as different, which is more often the case,

either the soul will have been changed or what is seen then in the dream is not the soul but an incorporeal image of the soul which is formed in a mysterious way, as when it gathers images in the imagination.

What Ethiopian does not normally see himself as black in dreams? Or if he sees himself in another color, has he not wondered if he has an accurate memory of the dream? But I do not know if anyone ever saw himself with color like air and light if he had never read Tertullian or heard about his opinion.

43. What are we to say about those who have been influenced by such visions and want to teach us from Scripture not about the soul but about God, saying that He is a being such as has been made present graphically to the imagination of the saints and has been described in allegorical language? These visions certainly are similar to the descriptions in allegorical passages. Hence, these interpreters are in error when they set up in their hearts the empty idols of their thoughts, not understanding that the saints judged their own visions as they would judge if they read or heard such things described by divine inspiration in figurative language. Thus, the seven ears and the seven cows are seven years; and the object like a linen cloth held by four strings, looking like a dish full of different animals, is the whole world with all the nations; and so of the rest, especially the immaterial things that are represented not by corporeal things but by images of them.

CHAPTER 26

Tertullian's views on the growth of the soul with the growth of the body

44. Tertullian was unwilling to say that the substance of the soul grows with the body. He feared to say this, lest its substance be said to decrease also and so be thought capable of annihilation. However, since he imagined the soul to be extended in space throughout the body, he did not fix a limit to its increase, and he held that from a small seed it became equal in size to the body. "But the power of the soul that contains the natural endowment implanted in it is gradually developed along with the body without any change in the limit of the substance which it received when breathed into the man at the beginning."

We probably would not understand this had Tertullian not made his meaning clear by a

comparison. This is what he says:

Take a certain quantity of gold or silver, a rough mass as yet. It is in a compressed condition, and at the moment it is smaller than it will be, but within the limits of the mass there is nothing but gold or silver. Afterwards, when it is beaten out into a sheet, it becomes larger than it was before through the flattening out of the original mass, not by any increment to it, for it is stretched out but not increased. And yet there is also an increase when it is extended. For it can be increased in its dimensions, though not in its substance. Then the sheen of the gold or silver, which was there in the mass, is now brought out. It was obscure in the original state, but it was not entirely lacking. Then different shapes are given to the metal according to its malleability as the artisan shapes it, adding nothing to the mass except its form. Thus the increase in the soul is to be thought of not as adding to its bulk but as calling forth its potentialities.

45. Who would believe that this writer could have been so eloquent in expressing such an opinion? But his words are more likely to make us shudder than laugh. Indeed, he would not be forced into this position if he could think of anything that exists and is not a body. What is more absurd than to think of a mass of metal being capable of increasing in one dimension, when it is pounded, without decreasing in another; or of being expanded in length and breadth without being contracted in thickness? Or can one think it possible that the mass of a body remains unchanged while all its dimensions increase unless its density is diminished? How, then, will the soul from the tiny seed fill the large body which it animates if it also is a body, but a body whose substance is not increased by any addition of matter? How will it fill the body to which it gives life unless it loses its density in proportion to the increase in size of the body which it animates? It is obvious that Tertullian feared that if the soul were to grow, it might also perish by diminishing, and yet he did not fear that it might perish by losing its density when growing in size.

But why should I delay any further on this matter? My treatment of it is going beyond what is needed to support my conclusions, and I have already made clear the positions I hold for certain and those that I consider doubtful, as well as the reasons for my doubts. With this I conclude the present book and turn to the matter that follows in the next.

BOOK ELEVEN

The Sin of Adam and Eve and Their Expulsion from Paradise

Chapter 1

The text of Genesis 2:25–3:24.

1. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed. Now the serpent was the most subtle of all the wild creatures which the Lord God had made on the earth. And the serpent said to the woman: “Why did God say, ‘You shall not eat of every tree in Paradise’?” And the woman said to the serpent: “We may eat of the fruit of trees that are in Paradise, but regarding the fruit of the tree in the middle of Paradise, God said: ‘You shall not eat of it nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” And the serpent said to the woman: “You will not die the death. For God knew that on the day on which you would eat of it your eyes would be open, and you would be like gods, knowing good and evil.” And the woman, seeing that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes and a delight to behold, took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some to her husband, and they ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God as He walked in Paradise in the late afternoon, and then Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God amidst the trees of Paradise. And the Lord God called Adam and said to him: “Adam, where are you?” Adam replied: “I heard Thy voice as Thou went walking in Paradise, and I was afraid because I am naked, and I hid myself.” The Lord God said to him: “Who told you that you were naked but that you have eaten of the one tree whereof I had commanded you not to eat?” And Adam replied: “The woman whom Thou gavest to be my companion gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman: “What is this that you have done?” And she

replied: “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.”

The Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle and above all beasts upon the earth. Upon your breast and your belly shall you go, and earth shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. She will lie in wait for your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel.” To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrows and your anguish. With sorrows you shall bring forth children, and you shall be subject to your husband, and he shall rule over you.” And to Adam he said: “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the one tree whereof I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the earth in your works. In sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life: thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the crops of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you have been taken, for you are earth and unto earth you shall return.”

Adam called his wife’s name “Life,” for she is the mother of all the living. And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said: “Behold, Adam has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. And now let him not put forth his hand and take of the fruit of the tree of life and eat and live forever.” And the Lord God sent him forth from the Paradise of pleasure to till the earth from which he was taken. He drove Adam out and placed him over against the Paradise of pleasure, and He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword turning every way to guard the path to the tree of life.

2. Before commenting on this Scripture text verse by verse, I think I should make here an observation which I remember having made earlier on in this treatise. One may expect me to defend the literal meaning of the narrative as it is set forth by the author. But if in the words of God, or in the words of someone called to play the role of a prophet, something is said which cannot be understood literally without

absurdity, there is no doubt that it must be taken as spoken figuratively in order to point to something else. It must not be doubted that the statement was made, a fact which the reliability of the writer and the promise of the commentator demand.

3. Hence, They were both naked. It is, then, true that the bodies of the two human beings living in Paradise were completely naked. And they were not ashamed. Why would they be ashamed, since they did not perceive in their members any law at war with the law of their mind? That law was rather the penalty for sin, inflicted on them after their transgression, when disobedience violated the command and justice punished the deed. But before this happened they were naked, as has been said, and they were not embarrassed. They experienced no motion of the flesh of which they would be ashamed. They did not think that anything had to be covered, because they did not feel that anything had to be restrained. How they would have begotten children has already been discussed. It must not be thought that the manner of begetting would have been the same as after the punishment which followed their sin; for before they would die, death entering the body of disobedient men by a just retribution would stir up the revolt of their disobedient members. This was not the state of Adam and Eve when they were naked and were not ashamed.

Chapter 2

How was the serpent the most subtle of beasts?

4. The serpent was there, the most subtle of all the wild creatures which the Lord God had made on the earth. Now, it is in a figurative sense that the serpent is called “the most subtle” (*prudentissimus*) or, according to many Latin manuscripts, “the wisest” (*sapientissimus*). In the proper meaning of the word, “wisdom” (*sapientia*) is normally taken in a good sense referring to God or the angels or the rational soul; but we speak of wise bees or ants because their works suggest an imitation of wisdom.

This serpent, however, could be called the wisest of all the beasts not by reason of its irrational soul but rather because of another spirit—that of the Devil—dwelling in it. For, however great was the fall of the sinful angels from their heavenly home when they were cast out because of their rebellion and pride, they are nevertheless by nature superior to all the beasts because of the excellence of reason in them. If the Devil, therefore, entered the serpent and possessed it, communicating his spirit to it in the manner in which the prophets of demons are usually possessed, it would be no wonder if he made it wiser than all beasts, which have a living but irrational soul.

But it is really a misuse of words to speak of wisdom (*sapientia*) in an evil creature, and of cunning (*astutia*) in a good one. In the proper sense and in ordinary usage, at least in Latin, men are called wise (*sapientes*) in a good sense, whereas cunning men (*astuti*) are understood to have evil in their hearts. Hence, some translators, as we can see in a large number of manuscripts, have translated the idea rather than the word into Latin, and thus have chosen to call this serpent more cunning (*astutior*) than all the beasts rather than wiser (*sapientior*) than all. I leave it to experts in Hebrew to say what the proper meaning of the word is in that language and whether in that language men may be called wise and be understood to be wise in a bad sense not by a misuse, but by the proper use, of the word. We can clearly read in another passage of Sacred Scripture about men who are wise in evil and not in good. And our Lord says that the children of the world are wiser than the children of light in providing for their own future—by means, however, that are fraudulent, not just.

Chapter 3

For some reason, hidden from us, God allowed the Devil to use the serpent.

5. We certainly must not imagine that the Devil independently chose the serpent to use it in tempting our first parents and persuading them to sin. In him, it is true, there was a desire to deceive rooted in his evil and envious will; but he could not

have accomplished his end except by using an animal over which he was allowed control. The will to do harm can come from any perverse spirit, but the power to do it can come only from God, and this must be because of some hidden and sublime principle of justice, because there is no iniquity in God.

Chapter 4

Why did God, foreknowing the result, allow Adam to be tempted?

6. If someone asks, therefore, why God allowed man to be tempted when He foreknew that man would yield to the tempter, I cannot sound the depths of divine wisdom, and I confess that the solution to this problem is far beyond my powers. There may be a hidden reason, made known only to those who are better and holier than I am, not because of their merits but simply by the grace of God. But in so far as God gives me the ability to understand or allows me to speak, I do not think that a man would have deserved great praise if he had been able to live a good life for the simple reason that nobody tempted him to live a bad one. For by nature he would have it in his power to will not to yield to the tempter, with the help of Him, of course, who resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble. Why, then, would God not allow a man to be tempted, although He foreknew he would yield? For the man would do the deed by his own free will and thus incur guilt, and he would have to undergo punishment according to God's justice to be restored to right order. Thus God would make known to a proud soul, for the instruction of the saints in ages to come, how wisely He uses even bad wills of souls when they perversely use their natures, which are good.

Chapter 5

Man fell because of his pride.

7. We must not imagine that the tempter would have caused the man to fall unless there had arisen in the man's soul a proud spirit that needed to be checked, so that the humiliation of his sin would teach him how wrong he was in relying on

himself. It is truly said, Before ruin the heart is lifted up, and before glory it is humbled. This is perhaps the voice of the man who says in the Psalm, In my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved." And then, when he had learned by experience what an evil is the proud reliance on one's own powers and what a good is the help of God's grace, he said, O Lord, by Thy favor Thou hast given strength to my beauty; and then Thou hast turned Thy face away, and I have been dismayed. But whether these words were said about the first man or about another, a lesson had to be taught to a soul that exalted itself and trusted too much in its own strength, even if the lesson involved experiencing punishment; for it must learn how wretched is the state of a creature if it withdraws from its Creator.

Here also there is an important lesson about the goodness of God, since no man who turns away from Him prospers. On the one hand, those who rejoice in the pleasures that bring death cannot be free of the fear of suffering; on the other hand, those who have become insensible through an excess of pride, and fail completely to realize the disaster of their desertion, are seen to be much more unfortunate by others who have been able to recognize such an evil. The result is that if the former refuse to take the remedy which would help them to avoid such ills, their example will help others to avoid them. For the Apostle James says, Each one is tempted when he is attracted and enticed by his own concupiscence. Then concupiscence, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Hence, when the swelling of pride is healed, a man rises up if before the trial there was no will to remain with God, but at least after the trial there is the will to return to Him.

Chapter 6

Why God continually allows men to be tempted.

8. Some people are puzzled by this temptation of the first man, wondering why God allowed it to happen, as if they do not see that in our days the whole human race is

unceasingly tempted by the snares of the Devil. Why does God allow this also? Perhaps we could say that by these temptations virtue is proved and exercised and that it is a more glorious victory not to have yielded when under temptation than to have been unable to be tempted. Even those who abandon their Creator and follow after their tempter continually tempt those who remain faithful to the word of God and who offer to their tempters an example of how to avoid yielding as a remedy for inordinate desires and arouse in them a holy fear as a remedy for pride. Hence St. Paul says, ... considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. It is remarkable how Sacred Scripture everywhere shows a continual concern about recommending that humility by which we are subject to our Creator, lest we should presume on our own strength as if we did not need His help.

Hence, since the saints make progress by means of sinners, and the faithful by means of the unfaithful, it is idle to say that God would not create those who He foreknew would be wicked. For why should He not create those who He foreknew would be a help to the good, so that they would be born to exercise and instruct men of good will in a useful way, and that they themselves would be justly punished for their own bad will?

Chapter 7

A creature made so as to be able not to sin is good.

9. God, they say, should have made man of such a nature that he would simply not wish to sin. Now I grant that a nature that has no desire at all to sin is a better nature. But let them grant for their part that, on the one hand, a nature is not evil if it is so made that it would be able not to sin if it were unwilling, and that, on the other hand, the decree by which it has been punished is just, since it has sinned by its free will and not by compulsion. If right reason tells us that that creature is better which finds absolutely no pleasure in what is forbidden, it also tells us that that creature is good which has it in its power to control a forbidden pleasure that may arise, so that it rejoices not only in lawful and just actions but also in the

control of sinful pleasure. Hence, since the latter nature is good and the former better, why should God make only the former and not both? Therefore, those who were ready to praise God only for the first class of creatures ought to praise Him all the more for both classes. The former class is found in the holy angels, the latter in holy men.

But those who have chosen evil have willingly and culpably corrupted a praiseworthy nature. However, the fact that this was foreknown is certainly no reason why they should not have been created. For they also have a place to fill in creation for the good of the saints. God, indeed, does not need the justice of any good man. How much less does He need the iniquity of a sinner!

Chapter 8

Why God created those who He foreknew would be wicked.

10. Who could say after serious thought, "It would be better for God not to create a man who He foreknew could be corrected by another's sin than to create that other who He foreknew must be condemned for his sin"? This would be to say that it is better that a man should not exist who by God's mercy would receive a crown of glory for using wisely the sin of another, than for that sinner also to exist who would be justly punished according to his deserts. For when reason shows beyond any doubt that there are two good things not equally good, but one superior to the other, simple people do not understand and say, "The two should be equal," which is equivalent to saying, "Only the greater good should exist." And thus, in wishing to establish equality among the kinds of goods, they reduce the number; and senselessly increasing one kind, they destroy the other.

Who would listen to these people if they were to say, "Since sight is more excellent than hearing, there ought to be four eyes and no ears"? Hence, if that rational creature is more excellent which without any fear of punishment serves God without pride, and if among men another has been created who is so constituted that he is unable to recognize God's gifts in himself except in seeing

another's punishment, so that he does not become proud but fears, that is, he does not presume on himself but relies on God—who in his right mind will say, "This creature ought to be like the other"? The man who makes such an objection should see that he is really saying nothing else than, "This creature ought not to be, but only the other." This attitude reveals a simple and ignorant mind. Why would God not create also those who He foreknew would be wicked, wishing to show His anger and manifest His power, and thus enduring with much patience the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for the vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory? For thus let him who boasts, boast only in the Lord, when he sees that not only his existence depends on God, and not on himself, but also that his well-being depends on none other than Him from whom he has his existence.

11. Consequently, it is inappropriate to say, "There ought not to be any men on whom God would bestow such a gift of His mercy if it could not take place unless there were those also in whom He showed the justice of His punishment."

Chapter 9

God willed that men should be what they themselves would will to be.

Why, indeed, should there not be both kinds of men, since the goodness and justice of God are duly proclaimed in both?

12. But the objector will say: "If God had willed it, even the wicked would have been good." How much better was the will of God, namely, that men should be what they willed to be, but that the good should not go unrewarded, or the wicked unpunished, and that thereby the existence of the wicked should be useful for others! "But God foreknew that their will would be evil." He foreknew this, indeed, and because His foreknowledge cannot be wrong, it follows that the evil will was theirs, not His. "Why, then, did He create men who He foreknew would turn out in this way?" Because He not only foresaw what evil they would do but

also what good He would bring about from their evil deeds. For He made them in such a way as to leave it in their power to perform some deed, even if they should deliberately choose evil, and to find that His action in their regard would be worthy of praise. Their evil will comes from themselves; their nature, which is good, and their punishment, which is just, come from God; He assigns them the place they deserve, and to others He offers a trial to profit by and an example to fear.

Chapter 10

Why God does not convert the wills of evil men to good.

13. But it is objected that since God is omnipotent He would be able to turn the bad wills of evil men into good wills. He would indeed. Why, then, did He not do so? Because He did not will to. Why He was unwilling is known to Him alone. We must not be wiser than we ought to be. But I think I have shown above that a rational creature is no small good, even a creature that is led to avoid evil by a consideration of evildoers. This class of good creatures would surely not exist if God had converted all evil wills to good, if He did not mete out just punishment for any wrongdoing, and if there were only that one class of men who would advance in His service without any thought of sin or punishment of evil deeds. As a result, under the pretext of increasing the number of more perfect men, the number of the good would be diminished.

Chapter 11

God allows the unjust to sin and be punished for the instruction of the just.

14. They ask, therefore, if there is anything in the works of God that needs the evil of another creature so that it may advance towards the good.

But are there men who have become so deaf and blind with controversy that they do not hear or see that when some are punished many are corrected? What pagan, what Jew, what heretic does not prove this by his daily life at home? But when

there is an argument about the truth or a search for it, these people are unwilling to look at the work of Divine Providence from which there comes a misfortune that makes them reflect, so that if those who are punished are not corrected, at least the others will fear their example, and the ruin of the wicked will contribute to the salvation of the good.

For surely God is not the author of the malice or wickedness of the sinners through whose just punishment He has provided for those who were to be given such a warning in accordance with His decrees. But although He foreknew that they were going to be wicked by their own perverse will, He did not refrain from creating them, looking to the advantage of those creatures who would not be able to advance to the good except by considering the lot of the wicked. Indeed, if the wicked did not exist, they would certainly serve no useful purpose. Is not a sufficient good accomplished in the fact that they exist, since they are surely useful for those who are good? When a man wants them not to exist, he really desires only that he himself may not be among their number.

15. Great are the works of the Lord, excellent in all that He wills! He foresees the good and He creates them; He foresees the wicked and He creates them. He gives Himself to the good that they may find their delight in Him; and He graciously bestows many of His gifts on the wicked also, mercifully forgiving them, justly punishing them, and at the same time mercifully punishing them, justly forgiving them, fearing nothing from anyone's malice, needing nothing from anyone's justice, looking not to His own interests from the works of the good, and looking to the interests of the good even in the punishments of the wicked. Why, then, would He not permit a man to be tempted and thereby to be revealed, convicted, and punished when his proud desire to be his own master would bring forth what it had conceived and would be confounded by its own offspring, and when his just punishment would deter from the sin of pride and disobedience generations yet to come, for whose sake this event was written down and proclaimed?

Chapter 12

The Devil could not have used the serpent except with God's permission.

16. If someone should ask why the Devil was allowed to carry out the temptation through a serpent particularly, the authority of Scripture should be enough to suggest that it happened with some meaning intended. After all, in speaking divinely Scripture deals with a whole universe of things revealed by God corresponding in a way to this natural universe of ours which is full of the works of His hands. Not that the Devil wished to symbolize something for our instruction, but since he could not have approached man to tempt him without God's permission, he surely could not have used any other creature in this act than the one allowed him.

Consequently, whatever meaning the serpent had is to be attributed to that disposition of Providence by which the Devil indeed had his desire to harm, but permission to do so only as given him by God, either to overturn and destroy the vessels of wrath or to humble and prove the vessels of mercy. We know the origin of the serpent: earth at the word of God produced all the cattle, beasts, and serpents. And all this world of creatures possessing irrational life was made subject, by the order established by God, to all the world of rational creatures having either good or bad will. What wonder, then, if the Devil is allowed to act through the serpent, since Christ Himself permitted demons to enter into pigs?

Chapter 13

The Manichees refuse to recognize the Devil as a creature of God.

17. Commentators are accustomed to consider very carefully the nature of the Devil, since certain heretics, scandalized by his evil will, want to remove him entirely from the creatures made by the true sovereign God and to attribute him to another principle which in their account is opposed to God. They cannot understand that everything that exists, in so far as it is a substance, is good, and that it could not

exist except in dependence upon the true God from whom every good comes. They also fail to see that an evil will is a disordered movement in which goods of a lower rank are preferred to higher goods, with the result that if the spirit of a rational creature should delight in its own power and excellence, it would be swollen with that pride by which it would fall from the beatitude of the spiritual paradise and waste away with envy. But in the case of such a spirit, it is a good that it lives and gives life to a body, whether a body composed of air, as in the case of the spirit of the Devil himself and of demons, or an earthly body, as in the case of the soul of man, even a man who is wicked and perverse. Consequently, while they refuse to admit that anything made by God sins of its own free will, they say that the substance of God Himself has been corrupted and perverted, first by necessity and then irremediably by free choice! But I have already written at length about this insane error.

Chapter 14

Envy, caused by pride, brought the Devil to ruin.

18. In this treatise we must investigate what is to be said according to Scripture about the Devil.

Did he from the very beginning of the world take delight in his own power and separate himself from that society and that charity by which the angels are blessed in their enjoyment of God? Or was he for a while in the holy company of the angels, himself just and blessed as they were? Some say that he fell from the heavenly abode because he envied man made to the image of God. Envy, indeed, does not precede pride but follows it: envy is not the cause of pride, but pride is the cause of envy. Since, therefore, pride is the love of one's own excellence, and envy is the hatred of another's happiness, it is easy to see which vice begets the other. For a person who loves his own excellence envies his peers because they are equal to him, his inferiors because he fears that they may become his equals, and his superiors because he is not their equal. It is by pride, therefore, that one

becomes envious, not by envy that one becomes proud.

Chapter 15

Pride is the beginning of all sin. The two loves in the two cities.

19. With good reason Scripture has said, Pride is the beginning of all sin. This testimony is supported also by the statement of St. Paul, Avarice is the root of all evils, if we understand “avarice” in the general sense of the word, that is, the attitude by which a person desires more than what is due by reason of his excellence, and a certain love of one’s own interest, his private interest, to which the Latin word *privatus* was wisely given, a term which obviously expresses loss rather than gain. For every privation (*privatio*) diminishes. Where pride, then, seeks to excel, there it is cast down into want and destitution, turning from the pursuit of the common good to one’s own individual good out of a destructive self-love.

In the stricter meaning of the word, avarice is what is more commonly called love of money. But St. Paul in using the word intended to go from the special to the general meaning and wished avarice to be understood in the broad sense of the word when he said, Avarice is the root of all evils. For it was by this vice that the Devil fell, and yet he certainly did not love money but rather his own power. Hence, it is perverse love of self that deprives (*privat*) this puffed-up spirit of the company of the holy angels, and his wretched state oppresses him as he yearns to have his fill of iniquity. In another place, then, where St. Paul said, For men will be lovers of self he immediately added lovers of money, going from the general notion of avarice, of which pride is the source, to this special sense, which is applied properly only to men. For men would not be lovers of money unless they thought that their excellence depended on their wealth. Opposed to this disease is charity, who seeks not her own, that is, does not rejoice in her own (*privata*) excellence; it is right to say, therefore, that she is not puffed up.

20. There are, then, two loves, of which one is holy, the other unclean; one turned towards the neighbor, the other centered on self; one looking to the common good, keeping in view the society of saints in heaven, the other bringing the common good under its own power, arrogantly looking to domination; one subject to God, the other rivaling Him; one tranquil, the other tempestuous; one peaceful, the other seditious; one preferring truth to false praise, the other eager for praise of any sort; one friendly, the other envious; one wishing for its neighbor what it wishes for itself, the other seeking to subject its neighbor to itself; one looking for its neighbor's advantage in ruling its neighbor, the other looking for its own advantage. These two loves started among the angels, one love in the good angels, the other in the bad; and they have marked the limits of the two cities established among men under the sublime and wonderful providence of God, who administers and orders all that He creates; and one city is the city of the just, and the other city is the city of the wicked.

With these two cities intermingled to a certain extent in time, the world moves on until they will be separated at the last judgment. The one will be joined to the holy angels and, being united with its King, will attain eternal life; the other will be joined to the wicked angels and, being united with its king, will be sent into eternal fire. Concerning these two cities I shall perhaps write more at length in another book, if the Lord is willing.

Chapter 16

Satan fell at the very beginning of creation.

21. Scripture does not state when pride cast the Devil down, perverting his good nature with an evil will. But reason clearly tells us that this happened first; it was because of his pride that he envied man. Indeed, it is obvious to all who reflect on the matter that pride is not born of envy but rather envy of pride. One can with good reason suppose that at the beginning of time the Devil fell by pride, and that there had not been any previous time when he lived in peace and beatitude with

the holy angels. On this supposition he apostatized from his Creator at the very beginning of creation. The words of our Lord, therefore, He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth, should be understood in both parts of the statement as referring to what was from the beginning, namely, not only that he was a murderer but also that he stood not in the truth.

He was indeed a murderer beginning at that point at which man could be killed; but of course man could not be killed before there existed a man to be killed! From the beginning, therefore, the Devil was a murderer because he killed the first man, before whom there were no other men. And he stood not in the truth, and this from the beginning when he was created, although he would be standing now if he had wanted to stand.

Chapter 17

Did the Devil know from the beginning that he would sin and be condemned?

22. How, indeed, can the Devil be thought to have lived a blessed life among the blessed angels? If he had no foreknowledge of the sin he would commit and of its punishment, that is, his abandonment of God and the subsequent eternal fire, one can rightly ask why he had no such knowledge. The holy angels are not uncertain of their eternal life and beatitude. For how would they be blessed if uncertain? Shall we say that God did not wish to reveal to the Devil, while he was still a good angel, what he would do or what he would suffer, while at the same time He revealed to the other angels that they would remain forever in His Truth? If this is so, the Devil before his fall was not equally blessed, indeed was not fully blessed, since those who are fully blessed are certain of their beatitude so that no fear troubles them. But what demerit did he have to be thus distinguished from the others so that God would not reveal the future to him, not even the future that pertained to him? Surely God did not punish him before he sinned, for God does not condemn the innocent.

Was he perhaps from another category of angels, to whom God did not give a

foreknowledge of the future even in what pertained to them? I do not see how those creatures can be blessed who are uncertain of their own beatitude. Thus, some have thought that the Devil was not numbered among those angels whose sublime nature placed them above the heavens, but was numbered among those who were made somewhat lower in the world and assigned to different offices. Such angels could perhaps have found pleasure even in something forbidden; but they would be able by their own free choice to reject that pleasure if they did not wish to sin. Their condition would be similar to that of man, especially the first man, who did not yet have in his members the penalty of sin; for even at a later time holy men obedient to God are able to be faithful and to overcome such temptations by the grace of God.

Chapter 18

The beatitude of man before the fall.

23. Should anyone be said to possess happiness when he is uncertain whether that state will remain or eventually be followed by a state of misery? This is a question that can be asked even about the first man. For if he foreknew his future sin and the divine chastisement, how could he have been happy? Therefore, he was not happy in Paradise. But this cannot be true, since he did not know he was going to sin. Given such ignorance, then, one of two alternatives is possible: either he was uncertain of his beatitude (and how was he truly happy?); or he had certitude based on false hope, not on knowledge (and how was he not a fool?).

24. Nevertheless, when the first man was still in a natural body, if as a reward for a life of obedience he was to be given companionship with the angels and a change of body from natural to spiritual, we can understand how he had a measure of happiness even if he had no foreknowledge of his future sin. Those also were ignorant of the future to whom St. Paul said, You who are spiritual should instruct such a man [one who has fallen into sin] in a spirit of gentleness, looking to

yourself, lest you too be tempted. But it is not unreasonable or wrong for us to say that these spiritual persons were already happy for the very reason that they were spiritual, not in their bodies but in the justice of their faith, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.

With greater reason, then, and in a fuller sense, man was happy in Paradise before he sinned, although he was uncertain about his future fall. He was happy in this hope of reward, the promised transformation of the body; and his hope was such that there was no tribulation for patience to endure in combat. He was not filled with vain presumption, like a fool being certain about the uncertain, but he was strong in faith and hope. Before possessing that life where he would be unquestionably certain of his own eternal life, he could rejoice, as Scripture says, with trembling; and with this rejoicing he could be happy much more abundantly in Paradise than are the saints here on earth, and less completely than the saints and the angels beyond the heavens in life eternal, but none the less enjoying a happiness that is real.

Chapter 19

The creation of the angels.

25. One might propose the theory that some angels could be happy in their own fashion while uncertain of their future sin and condemnation, or at least of their eternal salvation, without the hope that eventually by some change for the better they would become certain of their future lot. But this theory is unfounded and can hardly be admitted.

Of course, one might say that these angels have been created for tasks in the world and assigned to be subject to other angels more sublime and blessed, so that for the faithful performance of their offices they may receive the blessed and more sublime life, in the hope of which they can rejoice and even now be rightly called blessed. If it was from this class of angels that the Devil and his companions in sin fell, their lot is like that of men who fall from the justice of faith, sinning because

of a similar pride, either deceiving themselves or giving assent to their seducer.

26. Let those who are able maintain this theory of two classes of good angels: the supercelestial angels, among whom the angel who fell and became the Devil was never numbered, and the mundane angels, among whom he was numbered. For my part, I confess that at the present time I can think of no basis in Scripture for this theory. But I have felt constrained to ask if the Devil had any foreknowledge of his fall before it happened, lest I should say that the angels were uncertain, or at one time had been uncertain, about their own beatitude. Hence, it is not without reason that I expressed the opinion that from the beginning of creation, that is, from the beginning of time or of the creation of the Devil himself, he fell and never stood in the truth.

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BOOK ELEVEN

The Sin of Adam and Eve and Their Expulsion from Paradise

Chapter 20

The opinion of those who say that God created the Devil in an evil state.

27. Hence, certain writers hold that the Devil did not turn towards evil by the free choice of his will, but that he simply was created in evil, although created by the Lord God, the supreme and true Creator of all beings. For their opinion they cite a passage from the Book of Job referring to the Devil, where it is written, This is the beginning of the work fashioned by the Lord, which He made to be mocked by His angels. In harmony with this is that verse from the Psalms which says, This dragon, which Thou hast made to mock him. But there is a difference between the two texts: in the Psalm it says, which Thou hast made, but in Job it says, This is the beginning of the work fashioned by the Lord. Thus, in Job the text seems to say that in the beginning God fashioned the Devil to be evil and envious, a seducer and plainly a Devil, not corrupted by his own will but created thus.

Chapter 21

This opinion is refuted.

28. Certain writers attempt to show that this opinion (in which it is said that the Devil was not corrupted by his own will but was created as an evil creature by the Lord God Himself) does not contradict the statement of Scripture which says, God made all things, and behold, they were very good. With eloquence and learning they maintain that not only in the beginning but also now there are many corrupt wills, and that in spite of this the sum of all that was made, that is, all creation considered as a whole, is very good. They do not say that the wicked are good, but that by their wickedness they do not cause the glory and order of the whole creation under the rule and power and wisdom of God's providence to be disfigured or disturbed in any part. For the wills of individuals, even those that are bad, have definite and appropriate limits to their powers, and there is a balance of good and evil, with the result that the whole is beautiful when these parts are appropriately and justly ordered within it.

However, it is manifestly true, as anyone can see, that it is unjust for God, without any fault on a creature's part, to condemn in it what He Himself has created in it. It is also evident and certain from the Gospel text that the Devil and his angels were condemned, for the Lord foretold that He would say to those on His left, Go into everlasting fire, which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels. Hence, we cannot possibly believe that it was the nature created by God that merited punishment by eternal fire; rather, it was the Devil's own free will.

Chapter 22

Why God created angels and men who He knew would turn from Him.

29. It is not the nature of the Devil that is meant when Scripture says, This is the beginning of the work fashioned by the Lord, which He made to be mocked by His angels. But this statement could refer to a body formed of air that God gave him in keeping with his evil will; or to the role assigned to him whereby God made him, in spite of his will, useful for the good; or to the fact that God, knowing this creature would be evil by his own free choice, nonetheless made him, not holding back His goodness but

giving life and being to a will that would be depraved; for God foresaw the many good effects He would bring about from him by His divine goodness and power. But the Devil is said to be the beginning of the work fashioned by the Lord, which He made to be mocked by His angels, not because he was the first creature to be made, nor because he was made from the beginning as an evil creature; but God, knowing that he would have an evil will bent on harming the good, created him to be a benefit for the good.

This is the meaning of the words, to be mocked by His angels; for the Devil is mocked when the temptations by which he tries to corrupt the saints turn to their advantage, and the malice that he has willingly chosen becomes useful, in spite of his intentions, for the servants of God. Indeed, God foresaw this in creating him.

He is, then, the beginning of mocking because wicked men are vessels of the same Devil, and a body, so to speak, with him as their head. God foresaw that they would be wicked, and yet He created them for the benefit of the saints. Like the Devil, they are mocked when, in spite of their will to do harm, their example moves the saints to vigilance, to a devout humility in submission to God, and to an understanding of grace, and when it offers them an opportunity to suffer the wicked and to put to the test their love of their enemies.

But the Devil is the beginning of the creation that is mocked because he precedes it in time and in the primacy of his malice. God accomplishes His purpose regarding the Devil through His holy angels in the working of His providence by which He governs creatures, subjecting wicked angels to good angels so that the sinfulness of the wicked may have the power to do not all that it strives for but only what is allowed. And this restriction is put on wicked men as well as wicked angels, until that justice in which the just live by faith—a faith tested now as they patiently live among men—will be turned into judgment, so that they may be able to judge not only the twelve tribes of Israel but even the angels.

Chapter 23

In what sense the Devil was never grounded in the truth.

30. When it is said that the Devil had never been grounded in the truth and that he had

never led a blessed life with the angels, but that he had fallen at the very beginning of his creation, it must not be thought that he did not sin by his own free will but was created evil by God who is good. Otherwise he would not be said to have fallen from the beginning; indeed, he did not fall if that is the condition in which he was created. But when he was created, he immediately turned away from the light of Truth, being swollen with pride and corrupted by delight in his own powers. It follows, then, that he did not taste the sweetness of the blessed life of the angels. He did not receive it and then scorn it; rather, being unwilling to receive it, he forsook it and lost it. Hence, he could not have had foreknowledge of his fall, since wisdom is the fruit of piety.

He was impious, then, from the beginning, and his mind was consequently blind. He fell not from what he had received but from what he would have received if he had chosen to obey God. But since he refused, he fell from what he was going to receive, and yet he did not elude the power of Him whom he would not serve. According to his just deserts, therefore, he would find no joy in the light of justice nor any pardon from its condemnation.

Chapter 24

The wicked are the body of the Devil, and he is their head.

31. The Prophet Isaiah, referring to the Devil, says:

How has he fallen from heaven,
Lucifer, who rises at the dawn?
He has been trampled into the earth
Who sent messages to all the nations.
You said in your heart:
“I will ascend into heaven,
Above the stars of heaven
I will set my throne;
I will sit on the lofty mountain,
Above the lofty mountains of the north;
I will ascend above the clouds,

I will be like the Most High.”

But now you will go down to hell,

and so forth. These words are understood as addressed to the Devil under the figure of the king of Babylon. But for the most part they apply to the body of the Devil, which he recruits even from the human race, especially to those who attach themselves to him through pride by rejecting the commandments of God. Thus, one who was a devil was called a man in the Gospel, where it is said, A man who is an enemy has done this. And one who was a man was in turn called a devil in the Gospel, in the words, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Now, the body of Christ, which is the Church, is called Christ, as when St. Paul says, You are Abraham’s offspring, after he had said shortly before this, The promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” as if to many, but as to one, “And to your offspring,” which is Christ. Again, St. Paul says, For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, although they are many, are one body, so it is with Christ. In a similar manner, the body of the Devil is called the Devil, for he is the head of the body, that is, of the multitude of the wicked, especially of those who fall from heaven, inasmuch as they fall away from Christ and the Church. Hence it is that many statements are made figuratively, referring to the body, statements which are applicable not so much to the head as to the body and its members. Lucifer, then, who rose at dawn and fell, can be understood as the brood of apostates from Christ and the Church, a race that turned towards darkness on losing the light which it bore, just as those who turn towards God pass from darkness to light, that is, those who were darkness become light.

Chapter 25

The words of Ezekiel, 28:12–15, taken as referring to the body of the Devil.

32. Under the figure of the prince of Tyre these words in Ezekiel are taken as spoken to the Devil: You are the seal of likeness and the crown of beauty. You were in the delights of the Paradise of God, you were adorned with every precious stone, and so forth. Now these words are applicable not so much to the spirit who is the prince of evil as to his

body.

The Church is called paradise according to the words of the Cantic of Canticles, A garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up, a well of living water, a paradise of pomegranates. From here have fallen all heretics, either by public and physical separation, or by a hidden and spiritual separation in which they appear to be united with the body of the Church. All those who are separated have returned to their vomit, although after the remission of all their sins they had walked for a short time in the way of justice. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of justice than knowing it to have turned back from the holy commandment delivered to them. This is the wicked generation that the Lord describes when He says that the evil spirit goes out of a man and returns with seven other spirits, and that finding the house cleaned he dwells there, so that the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. It is to this class of men, who are already constituted as the body of the Devil, that these words can be applied: From the day when you were created with the cherubim (that is, with the throne of God, which is translated “the fullness of knowledge”), and He placed you on the holy mountain of God (that is, in the Church, as in the Psalms, He heard me from His holy mountain); you were in the midst of sparkling stones (that is, saints fervent in spirit, living stones); you went blameless in your days, from the day you were created until iniquity was found in you. These words could be more thoroughly examined, and perhaps it could be shown not only that this is a possible meaning but that really there is no other.

Chapter 26

Conclusion regarding the fall of the Devil and his angels.

33. But that would be a major undertaking and would require a treatise devoted to that subject alone. For the present, it should be sufficient to conclude with the following possible alternatives: either (1) from the moment of his creation the Devil by his unholy pride fell from the beatitude he would have received if he had willed it; or (2) there are certain angels assigned to inferior tasks in this world, in whose company he had lived, sharing their special kind of beatitude without knowledge of the future, and from whose company he fell through pride and impiety, a kind of archangel along with angels under

his leadership (if this hypothesis can be advanced—and it would be strange if it could); or (3) certainly a reason should be sought to explain how all the holy angels, if the Devil lived with them for a period of beatitude with his angels, did not themselves yet possess with certitude a foreknowledge of their unending happiness but acquired it after his downfall; or (4) a reason must be given to show how the Devil with his companions before their sin deserved to be marked off from the other angels, so that he would be ignorant of his impending fall, while they would be certain of their perseverance.

Nevertheless, let us not entertain any doubt that the angels who sinned were driven into the prison house of the misty air that surrounds our earth, according to the teaching of the apostles, to be detained there for punishment on the day of judgment; and that in the celestial beatitude of the holy angels, eternal life is not uncertain, nor will it be uncertain for us, according to God's mercy and grace and faithful promise, when we shall be joined to them with these bodies of ours transformed after the resurrection. In this hope we live, and in the grace of this promise we are re-created.

There are other questions about the Devil: why God created him knowing what he would become, and why the Almighty does not turn the Devil's will to good. We discussed these problems when we were treating the same question in relation to sinful men, and we leave the reader to seek what may be understood or believed or even newly discovered as a better explanation.

Chapter 27

How the Devil used the serpent.

34. God, who has supreme power over all that He has created and who uses the ministry of His holy angels to mock the Devil—for the Devil's evil will is used to serve the Church of God—did not permit him to tempt the woman except by the serpent, nor the man except by the woman. In the serpent it was the Devil who spoke, using that creature as an instrument, moving it as he was able to move it and as it was capable of being moved, to produce the sounds of words and the bodily signs by which the woman would understand the will of the tempter. But in the woman, who was a rational creature and able by her own powers to speak, it was not the Devil who spoke, but it was the woman

herself who uttered words and persuaded the man, although the Devil in a hidden way interiorly prompted within her what he had exteriorly accomplished when he used the serpent as an instrument. But if he acted solely by an interior influence, as he did in the case of Judas, whom he prompted to betray Christ, he could accomplish his purpose in a soul led by its pride and the love of its own power.

However, as I have already said, the Devil has the will to tempt man, but the power to do so and the manner of doing it do not depend on him. Since, therefore, he was permitted to do so, he tempted; and he tempted in the manner allowed him. But he had no knowledge of the fact that this temptation would profit certain members of the human race, nor did he will that result; and in this he was mocked by the angels.

Chapter 28

Did the serpent understand the words of the Devil? Other uses of serpents by the Devil.

35. The serpent did not understand the meaning of the words which were spoken through him to the woman, for we cannot suppose that its soul was changed into a rational soul. As a matter of fact, not even human beings, whose nature is rational, know what they are saying when a devil speaks through them in that state of possession which requires an exorcist. It is much less credible, then, that this serpent would understand the meaning of words which the Devil uttered through it and by it, since it would not understand a man speaking even if it were free from diabolical possession.

Many people think that serpents hear and understand the words of the Marsi, at whose incantations snakes are wont to dart forth from their hiding places. But in this also a diabolical power is at work to make us recognize how God's providence everywhere subjects one being to another in keeping with a natural order, and how His wisdom and power allow something to evil wills so that snakes rather than any other kind of animals become accustomed to be moved by human incantations. This indeed gives some indication that human nature was originally seduced by the words of a serpent. Demons rejoice at this power given to them, allowing them to move snakes through human incantations so as to deceive anyone they can. This is permitted to them in order to show a certain affinity they have with this kind of animal, thus calling to mind what happened

in the beginning. Furthermore, what happened in the beginning was permitted so that a picture of every diabolical temptation might be shown through the serpent to the human race, for these events were to be recorded for the instruction of men. This will be evident when God pronounces His sentence upon the serpent.

Chapter 29

In what sense the serpent is the most subtle of all the wild creatures.

36. Hence, the serpent is called the most subtle of all the wild creatures, that is, the most astute, because of the astuteness of the Devil, who spread his wiles in it and by it. Thus we speak of a subtle or astute tongue which a subtle or acute person moves to persuade subtly or acutely. For this power or facility certainly does not belong to the bodily member which we call the tongue but rather to the spirit which uses it. Similarly, we also say that the pens of certain writers lie, whereas in reality the ability to lie belongs only to living and thinking agents. But a pen is said to be lying when a liar tells his lies with it; and this would be the case if the serpent were called a liar because the Devil used it like a pen for his deceitful purpose.

37. I have thought it well to insist on this point lest anyone think that irrational beings have human intellects or that they are suddenly turned into rational animals. I should not like to see anyone seduced by that ridiculous and mischievous opinion about the transmigration of human souls into beasts or of bestial souls into humans. The serpent, therefore, spoke to the woman just as the ass spoke to Balaam as he sat on it, the difference being that in the former case it was the work of the Devil, in the latter case the work of an angel. Good and bad angels perform certain actions that are similar, just as did Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh. But in these wondrous works the good angels are more powerful, and the bad angels are unable to do any of even these acts except for what God permits through the good angels, so that He may give to everyone according to the disposition of the heart or according to the grace of God. In both cases He acts with justice and goodness through the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Chapter 30

The exchange between the serpent and the woman.

38. Therefore, The serpent said to the woman: “Why did God say, ‘You shall not eat of every tree in Paradise?’” And the woman said to the serpent: “We may eat of the fruit of trees that are in Paradise, but regarding the fruit of the tree in the middle of Paradise, God said: ‘You shall not eat of it nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

The serpent, then, first asked the question, and the woman replied, so that her transgression would be inexcusable, and no one would be able to say that the woman had forgotten the command of God. Of course, forgetting a command, especially this unique command which was so necessary, would involve culpable negligence and serious sin. But the sin is more evident when the command is retained in memory and God as present in His command is despised. Thus, when the Psalmist said, Those who are mindful of His commandments, it was necessary for him to add, in order to keep them. For many people hold them in memory to despise them, and their transgression is the more serious in so far as forgetfulness does not excuse them.

39. Then The serpent said to the woman: “You will not die the death. For God knew that on the day on which you would eat of it your eyes would be open, and you would be like gods, knowing good and evil.” How could these words persuade the woman that it was a good and useful thing that had been forbidden by God if there was not already in her heart a love of her own independence and a proud presumption on self which through that temptation was destined to be found out and cast down? Finally, not content with the words of the serpent, she also gazed on the tree and saw that it was good for food and a delight to behold; and since she did not believe that eating it could bring about her death, I think she assumed that God was using figurative language when He said, If you eat of it, you shall die. And so she took some of the fruit and ate and gave some also to her husband, who was with her, using perhaps some persuasive words which Scripture does not record but leaves to our intelligence to supply. Or perhaps there was no need to persuade her husband, since he saw that she was not dead from eating the fruit.

Chapter 31

In what sense the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened.

40. Therefore, they ate, and the eyes of both were opened. Opened to what except to concupiscence for one another in punishment for sin, born of the death of the flesh? Their bodies, then, were no longer just natural bodies capable of being transformed into a better and spiritual condition without dying, as would have been the case if they had remained obedient, but bodies of death in which the law in the members was at war with the law of the mind.

When they were created, of course, their eyes were not closed. Nor were they going about blind in the garden of delights, feeling their way about, in danger of unwittingly touching the forbidden tree and of picking in their ignorance the forbidden fruit. Indeed, how were the beasts and the birds brought to Adam for him to see what he would call them if he had no sight? And how did it happen that the woman was brought to the man when she was made so that without seeing her he would say, This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh? Finally, how did the woman see that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasing to the eyes and a delight to behold, if their eyes were closed?

41. Nevertheless, one should not take the whole passage in a figurative sense on the basis of one word used with a transferred meaning. Consider what was meant by the serpent's words, Your eyes will be open. The author states that this is what the serpent said; the meaning or thought behind what was said is left to the discernment of the reader. But the statement, Then the eyes of both were opened, and they perceived that they were naked, is put forth in the way in which the other facts are narrated, and they cannot suggest to us an allegorical narrative.

St. Luke—to cite a parallel case—did not quote figurative language spoken by another person: it was on his own authority that he narrated what had happened when he told about the two disciples, of whom one was Cleophas, and said that when the Lord had broken bread, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him whom they had not recognized on the road. St. Luke does not mean that they were walking with their eyes closed, but simply that they were unable to recognize Him. In the Gospel text as well as in our passage in Genesis there is no question of a narrative with a figurative meaning,

although Scripture has used a word in a transferred sense in speaking of “opened eyes” which were already literally open, meaning that they were opened to see and recognize what they had not formerly noticed.

When curiosity was stirred up and made bold to transgress a commandment, it was eager to experience the unknown, to see what would follow from touching what was forbidden, finding delight in taking a dangerous sort of liberty by bursting the bonds of the prohibition, thinking it likely that death, which had been feared, would not follow. We must assume that the fruit on that tree was similar to the fruit of other trees, which our first parents had tasted and found harmless. Hence, they supposed that God could more easily forgive sinners than they themselves could bear with patience their ignorance as to what the fruit was or why God had forbidden them to eat of it. As soon, then, as they had violated the precept, they were completely naked, interiorly deserted by the grace which they had offended by pride and arrogant love of their own independence. Casting their eyes on their bodies, they felt a movement of concupiscence which they had not known. It was in this respect, then, that their eyes were opened to that to which they had not been open before, although they were open to other things.

Chapter 32

Death and concupiscence the result of original sin.

42. This death occurred on the day when our first parents did what God had forbidden. Their bodies lost the privileged condition they had had, a condition mysteriously maintained by nourishment from the tree of life, which would have been able to preserve them from sickness and from the aging process. For although they had natural bodies which were to be transformed subsequently, yet even there in Paradise, in the food from the tree of life, there was a symbol of what happens through the spiritual nourishment given by Wisdom. The tree of life was indeed a sacrament of that nourishment which feeds the angels and by their participation in eternity preserves them from corruption.

When Adam and Eve, therefore, lost their privileged state, their bodies became subject to disease and death, like the bodies of animals, and consequently subject to the same drive by which there is in animals a desire to copulate and thus provide for offspring to take the

place of those that die. Nevertheless, even in its punishment the rational soul gave evidence of its innate nobility when it blushed because of the animal movement of the members of its body and when it imparted to it a sense of shame, not only because it began to experience something where there had been no such feeling before, but also because this movement of which it was ashamed came from the violation of the divine command. In this, man realized with what grace he had previously been clothed when he experienced nothing indecent in his nakedness. Then was accomplished the saying of the Psalmist, O Lord, by Thy favor Thou hast given strength to my beauty; but Thou hast turned away Thy face, and I have become troubled.

Finally, in this troubled state they hastened to get fig leaves, they sewed aprons together, and, because they had abandoned what was to their glory, they hid what was to their shame. But I do not think they had anything particular in mind in using fig leaves as if they were especially appropriate for covering the parts of the body affected by lust; but rather I believe that in their troubled state it was by an instinct deep within them that they were impelled to do this, with the result that in spite of their ignorance they would emphasize this aspect of their punishment, and thus this action would reveal the sinner and the narrative of it would instruct the reader.

Chapter 33

The voice of the Lord God as He walked in Paradise.

43. And they heard the voice of the Lord God as He walked in Paradise in the late afternoon. This had been the hour when God would visit the pair who fell away from the light of truth. Perhaps He had been accustomed to speak to them in a special interior manner (and how could it be described in human words?), just as He also speaks with the angels, enlightening their minds with His unchangeable truth, wherein their intellects know simultaneously all that happens in time but not simultaneously.

I suggest that God may have spoken thus with them, although not granting them the same degree of participation in divine wisdom that the angels have. But in a human way and in a manner less perfect, they may have had this kind of visit and conversation with God. Or perhaps it took place with the aid of a creature, either in an ecstasy of the spirit

with corporeal images, or in the bodily senses with some object made present to be seen or heard, just as God is accustomed to be seen or heard in a cloud through the ministry of His angels.

But their experience of hearing the voice of God as He walked in Paradise in the late afternoon could have been brought about in a visible way only by means of a creature. We cannot suppose that the substance of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which is invisible and everywhere present in its totality, appeared to the senses of the body, moving through space and time.

44. And then Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord amidst the trees of Paradise. When God interiorly turns His face away and man becomes confused, small wonder that his actions, on account of his great shame and fear, are like those of a madman. And deep within Adam and Eve there was also an instinct at work by which, even in their ignorance, they performed actions which would have some meaning for their descendants, who would one day understand and for whom these actions have been recorded.

Chapter 34

Adam, hiding himself in shame, is called forth by God.

45. And the Lord God called Adam and said to him: “Where are you?” This question is uttered by One who is admonishing, not by one who is ignorant. And there is surely some special meaning in the fact that just as the command was given to the man, and through him transmitted to the woman, so the man is questioned first. For the command came from the Lord through the man to the woman, but sin came from the Devil through the woman to the man. This is full of mystical meanings, not intended by the persons in whom these actions took place, but intended by the all-powerful Wisdom of God. Our purpose now, however, is not to unfold hidden meanings but to establish what actually happened.

46. Adam, then, replied, I heard Thy voice in Paradise, and I was afraid because I am naked, and I hid myself. It is quite probable that God was accustomed to appear in human form to these first two human beings, using a creature appropriate for such an action. But

He raised their attention to higher things and never permitted them to notice their nakedness until after their sin, when they felt a movement in their members of which they were ashamed, in accordance with that law of the members which is punishment for sin. They felt as men normally feel before the eyes of others; and, as a punishment of their sin, they had a desire to hide from Him from whom nothing can be hidden and to conceal their bodies from Him who sees the heart.

But what wonder is it if proud men, wishing to be like gods, became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened? In their prosperity they said that they were wise, and when God turned His face away they became fools. If they felt shame in the presence of one another—and this is why they had made aprons for themselves—they were all the more deeply afraid, even with this covering, to be seen by God, who benevolently condescended to confront them with a visible creature having the likeness of human eyes by which they would be seen. Indeed, if God appeared to them thus in order to let them speak as human beings might speak to another human being, as Abraham did by the oak of Mamre, this sort of friendship increased their shame after their sin, although it gave them confidence before their sin; and they no longer dared to show to these eyes the nakedness that offended their own.

Chapter 35

The excuses of Adam and Eve.

47. The Lord, therefore, wishing to interrogate the sinners in the manner followed in courts of law before imposing a greater punishment than that which already caused them to feel shame, said to them, Who told you that you were naked but that you have eaten of the one tree whereof I had commanded you not to eat? Because of this sin, death, engendered in accordance with the judgment of God, who had threatened them with this punishment, was the cause of the concupiscence that they experienced at the sight of their bodies. This is what is meant when it is said that their eyes were opened and that a sense of shame resulted.

And Adam replied, “The woman whom Thou gavest to be my companion gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” What pride! Did he say, “I have sinned”? He has the deformity of

confusion, not the humility of confession. This interrogation has been written down precisely because it took place in order to be recorded truthfully for our instruction (if it were not recorded truthfully, it would not instruct), so that we may see how men today are suffering from the disease of pride as they try to make their Creator responsible for any sin they commit, while they want attributed to themselves any good they do. Adam said, The woman whom Thou gavest with me (mecum), that is, to be my companion (ut esset mecum), gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate. As if she had been given to Adam for this purpose, and not rather that she should obey her husband and that both of them should obey God!

48. Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” And she replied, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.” She too fails to confess her sin. She shifts the blame to another, and although her sex is different from Adam’s, her pride is the same. Born of these first parents but not imitating them was the one who, afflicted by innumerable evils, has said and will continue to say to the end of time, I said: “O Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.” How much better it would have been if they had said the same thing! But the Lord had not yet cut the necks of sinners. There would be labors, sorrows, death, and all the afflictions of this world, and divine grace by which God at the opportune time comes to the aid of those whom He has taught in their affliction that they must not trust in themselves. The serpent beguiled me, she said, and I ate; as if the promptings of anyone should have been preferred to the command of God!

Chapter 36

God’s curse on the serpent.

49. The Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle and above all beasts upon the earth. Upon your breast and your belly shall you go, and earth shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. She will lie in wait for your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel.”

This entire statement is made in figurative language, and the reliability of the writer and

the truth of his narrative demand only that we do not doubt that the words were spoken. For the words, The Lord God said to the serpent, are the only words of the writer, and they are to be taken in the proper sense. It is true, therefore, that these words were spoken to the serpent. The rest of the words are God's words, and they leave the reader free to decide whether they are to be understood in the proper or figurative sense, in accordance with what I said in my introductory remarks at the beginning of this book. And if one asks why the serpent is not questioned about his motive for acting thus, it is obvious that this animal did not act by its own nature and will, but that working by it and through it and in it was the Devil, who had already been assigned to everlasting fire for his sin of impiety and pride.

What is said to the serpent, therefore, and is intended for him who worked through the serpent is undoubtedly to be understood in a figurative sense. For in these words the tempter is described as he will be with respect to the human race. For the human race began to be propagated only when this sentence was pronounced, apparently against the serpent but in reality against the Devil.

In the commentary I wrote entitled Two Books on Genesis against the Manichees, I have discussed to the best of my ability these words as they are to be understood in a figurative sense. Beyond this, if I am able on another occasion to give a more thorough and appropriate interpretation of the text, may God be with me to aid me in the task. But now my attention must not be turned without necessity to a purpose other than what I have undertaken.

Chapter 37

The sentence pronounced on the woman.

50. To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrows and your anguish. With sorrows you shall bring forth children, and you shall be subject to your husband, and he shall rule over you." These words that God spoke to the woman are also more appropriately understood in a figurative and prophetic sense. The woman, of course, had not yet given birth. Furthermore, the pain and anguish of childbirth belong solely to this

body of death (a death engendered by the transgression), in which the members from the beginning were those of a natural body, which, if man had not sinned, were destined not to die but to live in that other more blessed state until they would deserve to be transformed, after a life of virtue, into a better condition, as I have already stated above in several places. The punishment, then, given to the woman is also understood in a literal sense; and furthermore we must give consideration to the statement, And you shall be subject to your husband, and he shall rule over you, to see how it can be understood in the proper sense.

For we must believe that even before her sin woman had been made to be ruled by her husband and to be submissive and subject to him. But we can with reason understand that the servitude meant in these words is that in which there is a condition similar to that of slavery rather than a bond of love (so that the servitude by which men later began to be slaves to other men obviously has its origin in punishment for sin). St. Paul says, Through love serve one another. But by no means would he say, “Have dominion over one another.” Hence married persons through love can serve one another, but St. Paul does not permit a woman to rule over a man. The sentence pronounced by God gave this power rather to man; and it is not by her nature but rather by her sin that woman deserved to have her husband for a master. But if this order is not maintained, nature will be corrupted still more, and sin will be increased.

Chapter 38

The punishment of Adam and the name given to the woman.

51. God, then, said to her husband: “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the one tree whereof I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the earth in your works. In sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life: thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the crops of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you have been taken, for you are earth and unto earth you shall return.”

Who does not know that these are the labors of man on earth? And there surely can be no doubt that they would not be if man had not lost the happiness that was his in Paradise.

We must not hesitate, then, to take these words also first in their proper sense.

Nevertheless we must safeguard the prophetic meaning and be open to it, as it is foremost in God's intention when He speaks these words.

It is not without reason that Adam himself by a marvelous inspiration then gave the name Life to his wife saying, for she is the mother of all the living. These words, indeed, are not a statement or declaration of the author, but they are to be taken as the words of the first man himself. In saying for she is the mother of all the living, he seems to give a reason for the name he has conferred on her, explaining why he called her Life.

Chapter 39

The garments of skin; the condemnation of man's pride.

52. And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. This was done for the sake of a symbolic meaning, but nonetheless it was done; and similarly the words which were spoken for the sake of a symbolic meaning were nonetheless spoken. I have often said, and I do not hesitate to say it again and again, that we must demand of the author of a historical narrative that his account contain the events that actually occurred and the words that were actually spoken. Now in considering an event, we ask what happened and what it signifies; and in like manner, in considering words, we ask what was said and what it signifies. For we must not take as figurative the fact that something was said, whether what is said has a figurative or literal meaning.

53. And God said: "Behold Adam has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil." Now by whatever means or in whatever manner God spoke, it is certainly true that He said this; and therefore in the expression one of Us the plural reference must be to the Trinity, as was true in the expression Let Us make mankind, just as the Lord also referred to Himself and the Father in the expression We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

God, then, replied to man's proud ambition, showing the results of man's desire for what the Devil had suggested in the words You will be like gods. Behold, God said, Adam has become like one of Us. God spoke these words not so much to heap opprobrium on Adam as to instill in the rest of mankind, for whom these words have been written down,

a fear of being filled with a similar pride. God said, He has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. How are we to interpret this except to say that it is an example presented for the purpose of inspiring us with fear because the man not only did not become what he wanted to be but did not even retain the condition in which he had been created?

Chapter 40

Adam and Eve driven from Paradise.

54. “And now,” God said, “let him not put forth his hand and take of the fruit of the tree of life and eat and live forever.” And the Lord God sent him forth from the Paradise of pleasure to till the earth from which he was taken. The words in the first part of this text are spoken by God; then the author records what followed as a result of what was spoken. Deprived not only of that life which he would have received with the angels if he had observed God’s commandment, but also of that life which he had in Paradise, where his body enjoyed a privileged state, man had to be separated entirely from the tree of life. This was necessary because that privileged state of the body was kept in existence by an invisible power from the visible tree of life, and also because in that tree there was a visible sacrament of invisible wisdom. He had to be removed from the tree, then, because he was now destined to die, and because he was also excommunicated, as it were, just as in this paradise, which is the Church, people are sometimes excluded from the visible sacraments of the altar by ecclesiastical discipline.

55. He drove Adam out and placed him over against the Paradise of pleasure. This action actually took place, but it also has a symbolical meaning inasmuch as it prefigures a sinner living in a wretched state over against Paradise, by which is signified the blessed life.

And He placed the cherubim and a flaming sword turning every way to guard the path to the tree of life. We must believe that this took place in the visible Paradise through the operation of the heavenly powers, so that by the ministry of angels there was placed there a kind of flaming battlement. But we must not suppose that it was done in vain, for it must also signify something about the spiritual paradise.

Chapter 41

Theories about the nature of the sin of Adam and Eve.

56. I am aware of the fact that some exegetes have thought that the first couple were in a hurry to satisfy their desire for a knowledge of good and evil and that they wished to have before due time what was being postponed and kept for a more opportune occasion, and that the tempter induced them to offend God by anticipating what was not yet intended for them. Thus by their expulsion and condemnation they were said to have been deprived of the advantage of that which they might have enjoyed to their spiritual advancement had they sought it at the proper time as God intended. Now if these writers should wish to understand the tree not in the proper sense as a real tree with real fruit but in a figurative sense, their interpretation could result in a theory apparently consistent with faith and reason.

57. There is also the opinion of those who say that the first couple anticipated marriage by a kind of theft and that they had sexual intercourse before they were united by their Creator. And hence they say that sexual intercourse was signified by the word “tree,” and that it had been forbidden them until they would be joined in due time.

I suppose we must assume that Adam and Eve had been created at such a young age that they were required to wait until they would reach puberty! Or perhaps the union was not allowed as soon as it was possible? If it was impossible, it certainly would not take place! Or maybe the bride had to be given away by her father, and they had to wait for the solemn pronouncing of vows, the celebration of the wedding banquet, the appraisal of the dowry, and the signing of the contract! This is ridiculous, and furthermore it is taking us away from the literal meaning of what happened, which we undertook to explain and which we have explained in so far as God has wished to help us.

Chapter 42

Did Adam believe the words spoken through the serpent? How was he tempted to sin?

58. There is a more serious problem to be considered. If Adam was a spiritual man, in mind though not in body, how could he have believed what was said through the serpent, namely, that God forbade them to eat of the fruit of that one tree because He knew that if

they did they would be gods in their knowledge of good and evil? As if the Creator would grudge so great a good to His creatures! It is surely strange if a man endowed with a spiritual mind could have believed this. Was it because the man would not have been able to believe this that the woman was employed on the supposition that she had limited understanding, and also perhaps that she was living according to the spirit of the flesh and not according to the spirit of the mind?

Is this the reason that St. Paul does not attribute the image of God to her? For he says, A man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. This is not to say that the mind of woman is unable to receive that same image, for in that grace St. Paul says we are neither male nor female. But perhaps the woman had not yet received the gift of the knowledge of God, but under the direction and tutelage of her husband she was to acquire it gradually. It is not without reason that St. Paul said, For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not seduced, but the woman was seduced and fell into sin. In other words, it was through her that man sinned. For Paul calls him a sinner also when he says, in the likeness of the sin of Adam, who is a type of the One to come. But he says that Adam was not seduced. In fact, Adam under interrogation did not say, “The woman whom Thou gavest to be my companion seduced me and I ate”; but, She gave me fruit of the tree and I ate. On the other hand, the woman said, The serpent seduced me.

59. Can we imagine that Solomon, a man of incredible wisdom, believed that there was any advantage in the worship of idols? But he was unable to resist the love of women drawing him into this evil, and he did what he knew should not be done lest he should inhibit the deadly delights in which he was being wasted away. So it was in the case of Adam. After the woman had been seduced and had eaten of the forbidden fruit and had given Adam some to eat with her, he did not wish to make her unhappy, fearing she would waste away without his support, alienated from his affections, and that this dissension would be her death. He was not overcome by the concupiscence of the flesh, which he had not yet experienced in the law of the members at war with the law of his mind, but by the sort of attachment and affection by which it often happens that we

offend God while we try to keep the friendship of men. That he should not have acted thus is clear from the just sentence which God pronounced on him.

60. It was, therefore, in some other way that he was deceived; but I do not think that the wiles of the serpent by which the woman was seduced could have been in any way the means of his seduction. According to St. Paul, a seduction in the proper sense occurs when one is persuaded to accept as true what in reality is false; for instance, that God forbade Adam and Eve to touch the tree because He knew that if they touched it they would be like gods, as if He who made men grudged them divinity. But even if the man was moved by a spirit of pride, which could not have been hidden from God, who searches the heart, and if he was tempted by a desire to seek a new experience, when he saw that the woman after eating the fruit was not dead (as I have already suggested), I do not think that Adam, if he was endowed with a spiritual mind, could have possibly believed that God had forbidden them to eat the fruit of the tree out of envy.

But enough of these speculations. Adam and Eve were induced to commit this sin in accordance with the way in which such persons can be tempted. The account was written as it must be read by all, although the content would be understood as it ought to be by only a few.

BOOK TWELVE

The Paradise or Third Heaven Seen by St. Paul

Chapter 1

St. Paul's account of Paradise must be examined.

1. In writing the preceding eleven books of commentary on Genesis, I began with the opening lines of the sacred book and continued to the point where the first man was driven from Paradise. Whatever appeared to me as certain, I maintained and defended; whatever uncertain, I investigated according to my ability, sometimes venturing opinions, at other times expressing doubts. Still it was not my purpose to determine the judgment each one should form in regard to obscure questions, but rather to show the need we have of instruction in doubtful matters and to caution the reader against rash statements where we have been unable to arrive at certain knowledge.

But now, unhindered by the burden of presenting a detailed commentary on the sacred text, in this twelfth book I shall deal with the question of Paradise with greater liberty and at greater length. Otherwise I might seem to have dodged the difficulty in the passage where St. Paul apparently hints that Paradise is in the third heaven, when he says, I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—that he was caught up into Paradise and heard secret words that man may not repeat.

2. In the treatment of these words it is customary to ask first what St. Paul means by the third heaven, and then whether he wishes us to understand that Paradise is there, or whether he means that after he was caught up to the third heaven he was

caught up also to Paradise, wherever it may be. Thus he would indicate that to be caught up to the third heaven is not the same thing as to be caught up to Paradise, but that first there is the third heaven and then Paradise.

This matter is so obscure that a solution seems to me impossible, unless one can have recourse not to the words of St. Paul cited above but perhaps to some other passages of Scripture or some sound reasoning to find a proof that Paradise is or is not in the third heaven; for it is not even clear what the third heaven is: namely, whether it is to be numbered among corporeal or spiritual things. It might indeed be said that a man could not have been taken with his body except to some corporeal place. But since even St. Paul expressed himself as not knowing whether he was caught up in the body or out of the body, who would be so rash as to say that he knows what Paul himself says he does not know? However, if it is impossible for the spirit to be carried without the body to corporeal places or for the body to be carried to spiritual places, this very doubt of his virtually forces us to the conclusion that the region to which he was carried (for he is obviously speaking about himself) was such that it was impossible to discern clearly whether it was corporeal or spiritual.

Chapter 2

St. Paul could have been ignorant about how he saw Paradise if he saw it in ecstasy.

3. When images of bodies are formed in sleep or in ecstasy, a person does not distinguish them from bodies until he returns to the life of the bodily senses and recognizes that he was in a world of images which he did not derive from the senses of the body. What man on waking from sleep is not immediately aware that the objects he saw were mere images, although when he saw them in his sleep he was not able to distinguish them from corporeal objects seen in his waking hours? Still I know from my own experience (and for that reason I do not doubt that others could have had or can have the same experience also) that while seeing an

object in sleep I was aware that I was dreaming. I was fully convinced, even in my sleep, that the images which ordinarily deceive the imagination were not real bodies but only the phantasies of a dream. Sometimes, however, I have been misled in my attempts to persuade a friend whom I saw in a dream that the objects we were seeing were not bodies but only the images of dreamers—all the while he himself appeared among them as a mere dream image. Still I would tell him it was not true that we were even speaking to one another, and I would say that he at that moment was seeing something else in his sleep and that he had no knowledge at all of the fact that I was seeing these objects. But whenever I made an effort to persuade him that he was not real, I was partly inclined to believe that he was, since I should not be speaking to him if I really felt that he was not real. Hence my soul, which in some mysterious way was awake while I slept, was necessarily affected by the images of bodies, just as if they were real bodies.

4. With regard to ecstasies, I once had the opportunity of listening to the account of a certain man, a peasant, who had been in such a state but who could not accurately describe his experience. He knew that he was awake and was seeing something, though not with the eyes of the body. To use his own words, as far as I can recall them, he said: “My soul saw him, not my eyes.” However, he did not know whether it was a body or the image of a body, for he was unable to make such a distinction. But he was such a simple and trustworthy man that hearing him was for me just as convincing as seeing for myself the vision he narrated.
5. Hence, if Paul saw Paradise as Peter saw the dish sent from heaven; as John, what he described in the Apocalypse; as Ezekiel, the plain with the bones of the dead and their resurrection; as Isaiah, God seated and before Him the seraphim and the altar from which the live coal was taken to cleanse the lips of the prophet; it is obvious that he could have been unable to determine whether he saw Paradise in the body or out of the body.

Chapter 3

St. Paul was certain that he saw the third heaven but uncertain as to how he saw it.

6. But if the vision took place out of the body, and the objects of the vision were not bodies, it may still be asked whether they were images of bodies or whether they were a substance that bears no resemblance to body: as, for example, God; or the mind, intelligence, or reason of man; or the virtues, such as prudence, justice, chastity, charity, piety, and so forth. These are objects that we perceive with intellectual knowledge, when we enumerate, distinguish, and define them, not by a perception of their outlines, colors, sounds, odors, or tastes, their degrees of heat or cold, their hardness or softness, or their smoothness or roughness, but by another vision, another light, and another evidence far more excellent and certain than any other.
7. Again, then, let us return to the words of St. Paul himself and examine them more carefully, agreeing first of all without any hesitation that his understanding of corporeal and incorporeal nature was immeasurably more perfect than what we have been able to arrive at in our feeble attempts. Hence, if he knew that it was utterly impossible for spiritual things to be seen through the body, or bodily things to be seen out of the body, why did he not determine, through the objects that he saw, the manner in which he was able to see them? For if he was certain that they were spiritual things, why was he not equally sure that he saw them out of the body? But if he knew they were corporeal, why did he not also know that they could have been seen only through the body?

Why, then, does he doubt whether he saw them in the body or out of the body, unless perhaps he also doubts whether they were bodies or likenesses of bodies? Hence let us first see what there is in the whole tenor of the passage that gives no cause for doubt, and then perhaps from an examination of Paul's unqualified

assertions the nature of his doubt will be clarified.

8. I know, he says, a man in Christ, who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. He knows, therefore, that fourteen years ago a man was caught up in Christ to the third heaven. Of this he entertains no doubt; and we, accordingly, should entertain none. But he does doubt whether it was in the body or out of the body. Hence, when he is in doubt, who of us can dare be certain? But surely we cannot, as a consequence of this, doubt the existence of the third heaven to which he says a man was carried. If objective reality was shown him, it is the third heaven that was shown. On the other hand, if an image like corporeal substances was produced, it was not the third heaven that he saw; but the vision was produced in such a way that he seemed to rise above the first heaven, and then to see another one above it, and then to see still another higher up, so that, when he had come to this last one, he could say that he had been caught up to the third heaven. But that it was the third heaven to which he was caught up he did not doubt, nor did he wish us to doubt. He prefaces his account with the statement, “I know,” and continues in such a manner that only the man who does not believe the Apostle himself can refuse to accept as true what the Apostle says he knows.

Chapter 4

Difficulties about the vision St. Paul saw and the way in which he saw it.

9. He knows, then, that a man was caught up to the third heaven. Therefore it was actually the third heaven to which he was carried, and not some material symbol. Such a symbol was shown to Moses, but he was well aware of the difference between the essence of God Himself and a visible creature in which God was wont to manifest Himself to man. Hence he said, Show me Thyself. Moreover, it was not an image of a material substance such as that which John saw in spirit. He asked what it was, and he received the reply, It is a city, or They are peoples, or

something else, when he saw the beast or the woman or the waters or anything. But St. Paul declares, I know a man who was caught up to the third heaven.

10. But if Paul wished to give the name “heaven” to a spiritual image resembling a corporeal substance, it would also be an image of his body in which he was caught up and entered that heaven. And thus he would refer to his body, although it would be only an image of his body, just as he would speak of heaven, although it would be but an image of heaven. But he would take no pains to distinguish what he knew and what he did not know. He would not say: “I know a man, who was caught up to the third heaven, but I do not know whether it was in the body or out of the body.” He would simply narrate his vision and call the objects which he saw by the names of other objects which they resembled. When we speak of our dreams or of a revelation in them, we say: “I saw a mountain,” or “I saw a river,” or “I saw three men,” and so forth. We give each image the name of the object it resembles. But the Apostle says: “This I know; that I do not know.”

11. However, if both things appeared in the form of an image, both were equally known or not known. But if heaven itself was actually seen and therefore known, how could the body of the man appear only in an image?

12. For if he saw a corporeal heaven, why was he unable to recognize whether he saw it with the eyes of the body? And if by saying, Whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, he wished to indicate that he was uncertain whether he saw with the eyes of the body or those of the spirit, why was he not also uncertain whether he truly saw a corporeal heaven or only an image of it? Moreover, if he saw an incorporeal substance, not under some material image but as justice, wisdom, and the like are seen, and if this was the heaven, it is evident that nothing of such a nature can be seen with the eyes of the body. Hence, if he knew that he had seen something of this sort, he could not doubt that he saw

otherwise than with the eyes of the body. I know, he says, a man in Christ, who fourteen years ago.... "This I know, and let no one who believes me doubt my word." But whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know; God knows.

Chapter 5

How is Paul certain about the vision seen but uncertain about the manner in which he saw it?

13. What, then, does he know and distinguish from what he does not know, so that he may not deceive those who believe him? This same man, he says, was caught up to the third heaven. Now that heaven was either body or spirit. If it was a body and was seen with the eyes of the body, how does he know that it is that heaven and not know that he saw it in the body? But if it was spirit, either it was represented under the image of a body (and in this case it is just as doubtful whether it was a body as it is whether it was seen in the body) or it was seen as wisdom is seen in the mind without any bodily images. And yet in this supposition it is certain that it could not have been seen by the body. Hence either both things are certain or both uncertain. How can he be certain about what he saw and uncertain about the manner in which he saw it? Obviously he could not have seen an incorporeal nature by means of the body. But bodies, even if they can be seen without their visible corporeal qualities, are certainly not in this case seen by means of the body but in a manner altogether different (if there is any vision of this sort). Hence it would be strange if this kind of vision could resemble ocular vision so closely as to deceive St. Paul or force him into a state of doubt, so that, having seen a corporeal heaven otherwise than with the eyes of the body, he would say he was uncertain whether he saw it in the body or out of the body.

14. But the Apostle, who took such pains to distinguish what he knew from what he did not know, could not be guilty of a lie. Hence perhaps we should interpret him to mean that, when he was caught up to the third heaven, he could not tell whether

he was in the body (as a man's soul is in his body but withdrawn from the bodily senses while he is awake or asleep or in ecstasy, though his body is said to be alive) or whether he actually went out of the body, so that his body would lie in death until, the vision over, his soul would be reunited with his dead members. In the latter case he would not awaken as if from sleep nor return to his senses as one coming from an ecstasy, but from death he would truly come to life again. Hence what he saw when caught up to the third heaven, and what he affirms with certain knowledge, he saw in reality and not under an image. But since it was doubtful whether the withdrawal from his body left his body truly dead, or whether his soul was still somehow present as it is in a living body, while his mind was carried away to see and hear the secrets of the vision—perhaps because of this doubt he said, Whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows.

Chapter 6

Three kinds of vision.

15. To see an object not in an image but in itself, yet not through the body, is to see with a vision surpassing all other visions. There are various ways of seeing, and with God's help I shall try to explain them and show how they differ. When we read this one commandment, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, we experience three kinds of vision: one through the eyes, by which we see the letters; a second through the spirit, by which we think of our neighbor even when he is absent; and a third through an intuition of the mind, by which we see and understand love itself. Of these three kinds of vision the first is clear to everyone: through it we see heaven and earth and in them everything that meets the eye. The second, by which we think of corporeal things that are absent, is not difficult to explain; for we think of heaven and earth and the visible things in them even when we are in the dark. In this case we see nothing with the eyes of the body but in the soul behold corporeal images: whether true images, representing the bodies that

we have seen and still hold in memory, or fictitious images, fashioned by the power of thought. My manner of thinking about Carthage, which I know, is different from my manner of thinking about Alexandria, which I do not know. The third kind of vision, by which we see and understand love, embraces those objects which have no images resembling them which are not identical with them. A man, a tree, the sun, or any other bodies in heaven or on earth are seen in their own proper form when present, and are thought of, when absent, in images impressed upon the soul. There are two ways of seeing them: one through the bodily senses, the other through the spirit, in which images are contained. But in the case of love, is it seen in one manner when present, in the form in which it exists, and in another manner when absent, in an image resembling it? Certainly not. But in proportion to the clarity of our intellectual vision, love itself is seen by one more clearly, by another less so. If, however, we think of some corporeal image, it is not love that we behold.

Chapter 7

Three kinds of vision further explained.

16. These are the three kinds of visions about which we had something to say in the preceding books as occasion arose, though we did not there specify their number. Now that we have briefly explained them, since the question under consideration demands a somewhat fuller discussion of them, we must give them definite and appropriate names, in order to avoid the encumbrance of constant circumlocution. Hence let us call the first kind of vision corporeal, because it is perceived through the body and presented to the senses of the body. The second will be spiritual, for whatever is not a body, and yet is something, is rightly called spirit; and certainly the image of an absent body, though it resembles a body, is not itself a body any more than is the act of vision by which it is perceived. The third kind will be intellectual, from the word “intellect.” Mentale (mental) from mens (mind),

because it is just a newly-coined word, is too ridiculous for us to employ.

17. If I should give a more detailed account of the meanings of these words, my explanation would be rather diffuse and obscure, whereas there is little or no need for such a thing. Accordingly it is sufficient to know that a thing is called corporeal either in the proper sense, when it refers to bodies, or in a metaphorical sense, as in the statement, For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally. Now the Godhead is not a body, but because St. Paul calls the religious observances of the Old Testament shadows of what is to come (using the analogy of shadows in the physical world), he says that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ corporeally; for in Him was fulfilled all that was prefigured by those shadows, and thus in a certain sense He is the embodiment of the shadows; that is, He is the truth of those figures and symbols. The figures, therefore, are called shadows in a metaphorical rather than proper sense of the word; and similarly, in saying that the fullness of the Godhead dwells corporeally, Paul is using a metaphor.
18. The word “spiritual” is used in different ways. Even our body, in the state in which it will be in the resurrection of the saints, is called spiritual by St. Paul when he says, What is sown a natural body shall rise a spiritual body, meaning that it will be subject to the spirit in a wonderful way and possess every facility and incorruption, and without any need of bodily nourishment will be vivified by the spirit alone, but not that it will have an incorporeal substance. Moreover, the body as we have it in this life does not have the essence of a soul, and it cannot be identified with soul (anima) on the ground that it is called a living thing (animale). Furthermore, the air or a wind (which is the motion of the air) is called spirit, as in the following words: Fire, hail, snow, ice, and the spirit of the storm. The soul of man or beast also is called a spirit, as in the following passage: And who knows whether the spirit of the children of man ascends upward, and the spirit of the

beast descends downward into the earth? The word “spirit” is also used to designate the rational mind itself, in which there is, so to speak, an eye of the soul to which the image and knowledge of God pertain. Hence St. Paul urges, Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which has been created according to God; and elsewhere he speaks of the interior man, ... which is being renewed unto the knowledge of God according to the image of its Creator. So, too, after he had said, Therefore I myself with my mind serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin, he returned to the same thought in another place and added, The desires of the flesh are against the spirit and those of the spirit against the flesh, so that you do not do what you would; and thus he indifferently gave to the same thing the name “mind” or “spirit.” God also is called a spirit, as our Lord declares in the Gospel, God is spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.

Chapter 8

The basis for calling the second kind of vision spiritual.

19. It is not from any of these meanings we have mentioned, in which “spirit” is used, that we take the word “spiritual” to designate the kind of vision we are now treating. It is rather from that singular use of the word, found in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which spirit is obviously distinguished from mind. For, says St. Paul, if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my understanding is unfruitful. By the word “tongue” in this passage he is to be understood to refer to obscure and mystical signs, which profit no man if the understanding of his mind is removed from them, for he hears what he does not understand. Hence he also says, For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, though the spirit is speaking mysteries. Thus he makes it clear enough that in this passage he is speaking of the sort of tongue in which there are signs, such as the images and likenesses of things, which demand an intuition of the mind to be understood; and when they are not understood he says they are in the spirit, not in

the mind. And so he declares more plainly, If you give praise with the spirit, how shall he who fills the place of the uninstructed say “Amen” to your thanksgiving? For he does not know what you are saying.

Hence, in view of the fact that signs of things and not the things themselves are given forth by the tongue, the member of the body which is moved in the mouth in speech, St. Paul, using a metaphor, designated as tongue any production of signs before they are understood. But once the understanding has grasped the sign (and this activity is proper to the mind), then there is revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching. Accordingly he says, If I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in teaching? And he means to say that this happens when the intellect grasps the signs, or, in other words, the tongue, so that what is done is done not by the spirit alone but also by the mind.

Chapter 9

The meaning of spirit.

20. Hence those to whom signs were manifested in the spirit by means of certain likenesses of corporeal objects had not yet the gift of prophecy, unless the mind had performed its function, in order that the signs might be understood; and the man who interpreted what another had seen was more a prophet than the man who had seen. Thus it is obvious that prophecy belongs more to the mind than to the spirit, in the rather special sense in which the word spirit is taken, namely, in the sense of a power of the soul inferior to the mind, wherein likenesses of corporeal objects are produced. And so Joseph, who understood the meaning of the seven ears of corn and the seven kine, was more a prophet than Pharaoh, who saw them in a dream; for Pharaoh saw only a form impressed upon his spirit, whereas Joseph understood through a light given to his mind. And for this reason the former had the gift of tongues; the latter, the gift of prophecy. In the one there was the production of the images of things; in the other, the interpretation of the images

produced.

Less a prophet, therefore, is he who, by means of the images of corporeal objects, sees in spirit only the signs of the things signified, and a greater prophet is he who is granted only an understanding of the images. But the greatest prophet is he who is endowed with both gifts, namely, that of seeing in spirit the symbolic likenesses of corporeal objects and that of understanding them with the vital power of the mind. Such a one was Daniel. His pre-eminence was tested and established when he not only told the king the dream he had had but also explained the meaning of it. For the corporeal images themselves were produced in his spirit, and an understanding of them was revealed in his mind. I am using the word “spirit,” therefore, in the sense in which Paul uses it, where he distinguishes it from the mind: I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also. Here he implies that signs of things are formed in the spirit and that an understanding of the signs shines forth in the mind. According to this distinction, then, I have designated as spiritual the kind of vision by which we represent in thought the images of bodies even in their absence.

Chapter 10

The meaning of intellectual and intelligible.

21. But the intellectual type of vision, which is proper to the mind, is on a higher plane. The word “intellect,” so far as I know, cannot be used in a wide variety of meanings, such as we found in the case of the word “spirit.” But whether we say “intellectual” or “intelligible,” we mean one and the same thing, though some have wished to make a distinction between the two, designating as intelligible that reality which can be perceived by the intellect alone, and as intellectual the mind which understands. But whether there exists any being perceivable by the intellect alone but not itself endowed with intellect—this is a large and difficult question. On the other hand, I do not believe there is anyone who either thinks or says that there exists a thing which perceives with the intellect and is at the same time

incapable of being perceived by the intellect. For mind is not seen except by mind. Therefore, since it can be seen, it is intelligible, and since it can also see, it is intellectual, according to the distinction just mentioned. Putting aside, then, the extremely difficult question about a thing which would only be understood but not possess understanding, we here use “intellectual” and “intelligible” in the same sense.

Chapter 11

Corporeal vision is ordered to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the intellectual.

22. These three kinds of vision, therefore, namely, corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual, must be considered separately, so that reason may ascend from the lower to the higher. We have already proposed above an example by which all three kinds are illustrated in one sentence. For when we read, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, the letters are seen corporeally, the neighbor is thought of spiritually, and love is beheld intellectually. But the letters when absent can also be thought of spiritually, and the neighbor when present can be seen corporeally. But love can neither be seen in its own essence with the eyes of the body nor be thought of in the spirit by means of an image like a body; but only in the mind, that is, in the intellect, can it be known and perceived. Corporeal vision, indeed, does not oversee any operations of the other two kinds of vision; rather, the object perceived by it is announced to the spiritual vision, which acts as an overseer. For when an object is seen by the eyes, an image of it is immediately produced in the spirit. But this representation is not perceived unless we remove our eyes from the object that we were gazing at through the eyes and find an image of it within our soul. And if indeed the spirit is irrational, as in the beasts, the announcement made by the eyes goes just as far as the spirit. But if the soul is rational, the announcement is made also to the intellect, which presides over the spirit. And so, after the eyes have taken their object in and announced it to the spirit, in order that an image of it may be produced there, then, if it is symbolic of something, its

meaning is either immediately understood by the intellect or sought out; for there can be neither understanding nor searching except by the functioning of the mind.

23. Baltassar the King saw the fingers of a hand writing on the wall, and immediately the image of a corporeal object was impressed on his spirit by means of a bodily sensation; and when the vision was gone, the image remained in his thoughts. It was seen in spirit but not understood. At the time when the sign was produced in a corporeal manner and was presented to his bodily eyes, Baltassar did not understand it, though even then he understood that it was a sign and knew this from the exercise of his mind. For since he was seeking out its meaning, it was his mind certainly that was conducting the search.

When he failed to discover the meaning, Daniel came forward; and, his mind illuminated by the spirit of prophecy, he unfolded to the troubled king the prophetic meaning of the sign. For Daniel, by reason of the sort of vision that is proper to the mind, was more a prophet than the king, who had seen with the eyes of the body a corporeal sign and in thought had beheld within his spirit the image of the object after its disappearance. But the king could do no more than recognize with his intellect that it was a sign and enquire into its meaning.

24. Peter, carried out of himself, saw a vessel, held by four strings and filled with various animals, being let down from heaven; and he also heard a voice which said, Kill and eat. When, on returning to his senses, he was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit announced to him the arrival of those whom Cornelius had sent, saying, Behold, some men are looking for you; arise, go down, and depart with them, for I have sent them. And when he came to Cornelius he revealed what he understood by the vision in which he had heard the words, What God has cleansed, you must not call common. But God, he said, has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore, because he was carried out of the bodily senses at the time when he saw the dish, it was in the spirit that

he also heard the words Kill and eat, and What God has cleansed, you must not call common. His memory retained all that he had seen and heard; and on his return to his bodily senses, he beheld the images within the same spiritual power that had seen the vision and he pondered over them in thought. These objects were not bodily things but images of bodily things, both at the time when he first was carried away and beheld them, and later when he recalled them and thought of them. When, however, he deliberated and sought for an understanding of these signs, it was his mind that was making the effort—but all in vain until he received word of the arrival of the men from Cornelius. Now with this supplementary vision of the bodily eyes, and with the Holy Spirit saying to him, Depart with them (speaking to him within that same spirit in which He had shown the sign and impressed the words), Peter's mind with God's help understood what was meant by all these signs. A careful consideration of these and other similar facts makes it abundantly clear that corporeal vision is ordered to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the intellectual.

Chapter 12

Corporeal and spiritual vision.

25. But when, during our waking hours, in full possession of our bodily senses, we experience a corporeal vision, we distinguish between this vision and the spiritual vision by which we think of absent bodies in imagination—whether recalling in memory objects that we know, or somehow forming unknown objects which are in the power of thought possessed by the spirit, or arbitrarily and fancifully fashioning objects which have no real existence. From all such objects we distinguish the bodies which we see and which are present to our senses, so that we have no doubt that these are bodies and that the others are images of bodies. But it may sometimes be that by an excessive application of thought, or by the influence of some disorder (as happens to those who are delirious with fever), or by the agency of some other spirit, whether good or evil, the images of bodies are

produced in the spirit just as if bodies were present to the senses of the body, though the attention of the soul may meanwhile remain alert even in the bodily senses. In this case images of bodies are seen appearing in the spirit, and real bodies are perceived through the eyes. The result is that at the same time one man who is present will be seen with the eyes and another who is absent will be seen in the spirit as if with the eyes. I have known people affected thus, who conversed not only with those truly present but also with others who were absent, addressing them as if they were present. Returning to their normal state, some related what they saw but others were unable to do so. In the same way also some people forget their dreams while others remember theirs.

But when the attention of the mind is completely carried off and turned away from the senses of the body, then there is rather the state called ecstasy. Then any bodies that are present are not seen at all, though the eyes may be wide open; and no sounds at all are heard. The whole soul is intent upon images of bodies present to spiritual vision or upon incorporeal realities present to intellectual vision without benefit of bodily images.

26. But when the mind is completely drawn away from the senses of the body, and the spiritual vision is occupied with the images of bodily things (whether it be in sleep or in ecstasy), if the objects seen have no special meaning, they are the imaginings of the soul itself. In such a way, even people who possess normal mental health and are unmoved by any extraordinary state of mind contemplate in thought during their waking hours the images of many bodies that are not present to the bodily senses.

But these people differ from those in an abnormal state, in that they distinguish with a sure instinct these images from bodies that are really present. Now it may be that images have some special meaning, whether they come to people who are asleep, or to those who are awake and see with their eyes bodies present before them and behold in the spirit images of bodies absent as if present before the eyes,

or to those whose minds are withdrawn from the senses of the body in the state called ecstasy. But it is a remarkable thing if another spirit can so mingle with the spirit of a man as to manifest its knowledge through images presented to the mind with which it mingles, whether this mind itself understands them or whether they are understood by the other spirit and by it unfolded to the mind. But if this knowledge is revealed to the mind (and it cannot surely be revealed by a body), it follows of necessity that the revelation must come only from some spirit.

Chapter 13

The power of divination.

27. There are some who hold that the human soul has within itself a power of divination. But if this is so, why is it not always able to exercise this power, since it always wishes to do so? Is it because it has not always the aid needed for the exercise of the power? Well then, any aid that is given to assist the soul in divination could not come from nothing or from a body. Hence the soul would have to receive aid from a spirit. Then how is it aided? Does something happen in the body whereby the attention of the soul is somehow disengaged and illuminated to such an extent that it sees within itself symbolic likenesses which were already there but which it did not see (just as we also have in memory many objects which we do not behold)? Or are images produced in the soul which were not previously there? Or are they in some spirit into which the soul rushes and enters to see them? But if the soul already possessed them as its very own, why did the soul not also understand them? For it often happens, indeed most frequently, that it does not understand them. Should we say that, just as the spirit is assisted in order to see images within itself, the mind also, unless it receives similar aid, cannot understand the objects contained in the spirit? Or should it be said perhaps that there is no question of a removal of bodily impediments or disengagement of the soul from them in order that it may by its own power go out to the objects to be seen, but that it is carried directly to these objects, whether just to see them in the

spirit or to know them also in the intellect? Or does the soul see the objects sometimes in itself and at other times by means of mingling with another spirit?

Whichever of these opinions is the right one, we ought not to be careless in our assertions. But of one thing there should be no doubt: corporeal images seen in the spirit are not always signs of other things, whether they are seen in waking hours, in sleep, or in sickness; but it would be a strange thing if an ecstasy could ever take place without the likenesses of bodily things in it having a meaning.

28. There is, of course, no cause for wonder if even those possessed by a devil occasionally speak the truth about objects beyond the reach of their senses at the time. This, to be sure, happens by some mysterious union with the evil spirit, so that the tormenter and his victim seem to be one and the same spirit. But when a good spirit seizes or ravishes the spirit of a man to direct it to an extraordinary vision, there can be no doubt that the images are signs of other things which it is useful to know, for this is a gift of God. The discernment of these experiences is certainly a most difficult task when the evil spirit acts in a seemingly peaceful manner and, without tormenting the body, possesses a man's spirit and says what he is able, sometimes even speaking the truth and disclosing useful knowledge of the future. In this case he transforms himself, according to Scripture, as if into an angel of light, in order that, once having gained his victim's confidence in matters that are manifestly good, he may then lure his victim into his snares. This spirit, so far as I know, cannot be recognized except by that gift mentioned by St. Paul, where he speaks of the different gifts of God: ... to another the distinguishing of spirits.

Chapter 14

Intellectual vision is not deceived; in the other kinds of vision deception is not always harmful.

But when the evil spirit has achieved his purpose and led someone on to what is contrary to good morals or the rule of faith, it is no great achievement to discern

his presence—for in that case there are many who discern him. But the gift of discernment enables one in the very beginning (when the spirit appears as a good spirit to the majority) to judge immediately whether he is evil.

29. By means of corporeal vision as well as by means of the images of corporeal objects revealed in the spirit, good spirits instruct men and evil spirits deceive them. But there is no deception in intellectual vision; for either a person does not understand, and this is the case of one who judges something to be other than it is, or he does understand, and then his vision is necessarily true. The eyes are helpless when they see a body which resembles another body and which they cannot distinguish from the other; and the attention of the mind is helpless when in the spirit there is produced a likeness of a body which it cannot distinguish from the body itself. But the intellect is employed to seek out the meaning that these things have or the useful lessons that they teach; and either it finds its object and enjoys the fruit of its search, or it fails to find it and continues to reflect for fear of falling into some deadly error through a mischievous spirit of intellectual pride.

30. And with God's help the intellect prudently judges the nature and importance of those matters in which even erroneous thinking may take place without harm to the soul. When, for instance, a man who is secretly evil has a good name among good men, it cannot be said that this judgment involves more danger for those who think him so than harm for the man himself—provided no error is made in the true realities, that is to say, in Goodness itself by which a person becomes good. Again, men in general do not suffer any harm from the fact that in their dreams they mistake the likenesses of bodies for real bodies. Moreover, Peter suffered no harm when, upon being released from his chains and led forth by an angel, he was induced by this sudden miracle to believe that he was seeing a vision; or when in his ecstasy he replied, Nay, Lord, for never did I eat anything common or unclean, thinking that the very objects shown him in the dish were real animals. When we

discover that all these things are other than we thought they were at the time we saw them, we experience no regrets that they have appeared to us in this way, provided we do not have to reproach ourselves with an obstinate denial of the faith or with vain and sacrilegious opinions. So also when the Devil deceives us with corporeal visions, no harm is done by the fact that he has played tricks with our eyes, so long as we do not deviate from the true faith or lose the integrity of intelligence, by which God instructs those who are obedient to Him. Or if the Devil should cozen the soul with a spiritual vision by means of the images of bodies, leading it to think there is a body where there is none, no harm is done the soul if it does not consent to an evil suggestion.

Chapter 15

Impure dreams not culpable.

31. And hence a question sometimes arises about consent given in sleep when people dream even of having carnal intercourse contrary to their previous good resolutions as well as against what is lawful. This does not happen except when there come into our dreams objects of which we also thought in our waking hours (not consenting to pleasure in them but thinking of them, as when for some reason we speak of such things), and in our sleep there appear images which naturally move the flesh. Then what nature has gathered together it discharges through the organs of generation—a fact that I could not mention without also thinking of it. Now if the images of these corporeal things, which I have necessarily thought of in order to say what I have said, were to appear in sleep as vividly as do real bodies to those who are awake, there would follow that which in waking hours could not happen without sin. For who, at least when speaking of this matter and by the necessity of the subject saying something about carnal intercourse he has had, is able to refrain from thinking about the subject of which he is speaking? Moreover, when the image that arises in the thoughts of the speaker becomes so vivid in the dream of the sleeper that it is indistinguishable from actual

intercourse, it immediately moves the flesh and the natural result follows. Yet this happens without sin, just as the matter is spoken of without sin by a man wide awake, who doubtless thinks about it in order to speak of it.

But a right disposition of soul, purified by a desire for what is more perfect, kills many desires that have no connection with the natural motions of the flesh. Chaste people while awake curb and restrain these motions, though in their sleep they are unable to do so because they cannot control the appearance of those corporeal images that are indistinguishable from bodies. But because of this right disposition, the soul's merits are sometimes manifest even in sleep. Solomon even while asleep preferred wisdom to all else and begged it of the Lord without a thought for the rest; and, as Scripture attests, this was pleasing to the Lord, and He did not leave this good desire long without a fitting reward.

Chapter 16

Bodies perceived do not produce images in the spirit; the spirit produces them in itself.

32. Bodily sensation, therefore, belongs to the visible corporeal world and flows through the channels of the five senses, which are capable of perceiving objects even at a distance. Light, the finest element in bodies and hence more akin to soul than the others, is first of all diffused in a pure state through the eyes and shines forth in rays from the eyes to behold visible objects. Moreover, it intermingles in some way with pure air, with misty and vaporous air, with a crasser sort of liquid, and with solid matter; and in these four states, as well as in its pure state in ocular vision, in which it is most perfect, it brings about the five kinds of sensation. This matter, I recall, I have discussed in Book Four as well as in Book Seven.

Now this heaven which meets the eyes, and from which the stars and other luminous bodies shine forth, is far more perfect than all corporeal elements, just as ocular vision is the most perfect of the bodily senses. But, since every spirit is unquestionably superior to every body, it follows that a spiritual nature is superior

to this corporeal heaven, not because of its place but because of the excellence of its nature; and the same superiority is enjoyed also by that spiritual nature in which the images of bodily things are produced.

33. In this connection there is a remarkable thing to be noted. Spirit takes precedence over body, and the image of a body comes after the real body. But, since that which is second in time is produced in that which is prior in nature, the image of a body in a spirit is more excellent than the body itself in its own substance.

It must not, of course, be thought that a body produces something in the spirit, as if the spirit were subjected as matter to the action of a body. For he who produces something is in every respect more excellent than the thing from which he produces it. Now body is in no way more excellent than spirit; indeed, spirit is obviously superior to body. Hence, though we first see a body that we had not seen before and thereupon an image of it arises in our spirit, and in this same spirit we recall it when it is absent, nevertheless the body does not produce this image in the spirit, but the spirit produces it within itself. It does this with a wonderful speed that far surpasses the sluggish actions of the body. As soon as the eyes have seen their object, an image of it is formed without a moment's delay in the spirit of the one who sees.

And it is the same in the case of hearing. Unless the spirit immediately formed within itself and retained in memory an image of the word perceived by the ears, one could not tell whether the second syllable was actually the second one, since the first would no longer exist once it had impinged upon the ear and passed away. And so all habits of speech, all sweetness of song, all motion in the acts of our body would break down and come to nought, if the spirit did not retain a memory of past bodily motions with which to join further operations. And the spirit surely does not retain these motions except in so far as it has formed them in imagination within itself. Furthermore, there are within us images of our future actions before the actions themselves begin. For what act do we perform through the body that

the spirit has not previously fashioned in thought, first seeing within itself the likenesses of all visible operations and in some way ordering them?

Chapter 17

Three extraordinary cases: a man possessed, a man in delirium, and a boy in great physical pain.

34. It is difficult to determine and explain how even evil spirits know these spiritual likenesses of bodies in our minds or how this earthly body of ours impedes our soul and hinders it from seeing the images that are in the spirit of our fellow man. But we have abundant proof that thoughts arise in men at the suggestion of demons. And yet, if these spirits could discern the virtues within men, they would not try them. Surely if the Devil could see the remarkable and heroic patience of Job, he would not wish to suffer defeat in his efforts to tempt him. Besides, the power of evil spirits to declare from a considerable distance the occurrence of an event which some days later will be confirmed by the fact should not cause surprise. This they can do by their keenness of perception, which even with regard to corporeal objects is more perfect in them than it is in us, as well as by the remarkable speed of their bodies, which are far more subtle than ours.

35. I once discovered a man possessed by an unclean spirit. Though confined within his home, he would tell when a priest twelve miles away had started out to visit him. He would also declare where the priest was at each stage of his journey, how near he was, when he was entering the grounds, the house, and the bedroom, until finally he stood before him. Although the possessed man did not see all this with his eyes, still, unless he saw it some way or other, he could not declare it all so accurately.

But the man had a fever and spoke as if in delirium. And perhaps he really was delirious, but he was considered possessed because of what he said. He would accept no food from his family, but only from the priest. To the attentions of his

own relatives he offered violent resistance as far as he was able. He would be quiet only when the priest came, and to him alone would he show docility and answer with submission. But his madness or possession did not yield even to the priest until he was cured of his fever, as delirious people are normally cured. After that he suffered no recurrence of the malady.

36. I know of another case of a man undoubtedly delirious, who predicted the death of a certain woman. He did this not as one foretelling the future but as if recalling a past event. "She is dead," he said when her name was mentioned in his presence; "I saw her carried out; they followed this route with her body." This he said while she was alive and well. But a few days later she died suddenly and she was carried forth along the route that he had predicted.

37. There was also among us a boy who was in the early stages of puberty and suffering from a severe pain in the genital organs. The doctors were unable to diagnose the case. All they knew was that the affected nerve was hidden inside, so that even if they would remove the foreskin, which was unusually long, the nerve would not be visible but would be found only with great difficulty. The distillation of a viscous and stinging liquid inflamed the testicles and groin. The acute pain would not last long; but when the boy suffered from it, he would shout violently and toss about like a madman, as often happens when people are in great physical pain. And then in the midst of his cries he would lose all sensation and lie with his eyes open, seeing no one and remaining motionless even when someone would pinch him. After a time he would awake as if from sleep and, no longer feeling any pain, would reveal what he had seen. Then after a few days he would go through the same experience. He said that in all or in most of his visions he saw two persons, an old man and a boy, and that they told and showed him what he heard and saw.

One day he saw a choir of the faithful bathed in a wonderful light as they sang hymns of joy, and at the same time a company of the wicked surrounded with darkness and suffering various kinds of bitter torments. The old man and the boy were his guides, pointing out and explaining what the one group had done to merit their happiness and the other to merit their misery. He had this vision on Easter Sunday, after spending the whole of Lent without feeling any of the pain from which he had before enjoyed scarcely even a respite of three days at a time. At the beginning of Lent he had had a vision of these two, who had promised him that for forty days he would feel no pain. Then they gave him a kind of medical prescription, advising that his foreskin be removed. He followed the advice and for a long time experienced no pain. But when his old trouble returned and he began to see the same visions, he was further advised by them to wade into the sea up to his thighs and, after remaining there for a time, to come out. They assured him that from then on he would never again experience the bitter pain he had been suffering but only the annoyance of the viscous liquid that we have mentioned above.

And that is the way it turned out. Never again was he carried out of his senses as before, nor did he have any of the visions he used to have when, in the midst of his pains and terrifying cries, he would suddenly become silent and senseless. Later on, however, he regained his health under the doctor's care, but he did not remain steadfast in his pursuit of sanctity.

Chapter 18

The production of images in the soul is mysterious.

38. If anyone is able to discover the causes of these visions and divinations, and the methods followed in them, and to grasp these matters with certainty, I should prefer to listen to him than to have other people look for a dissertation from me. Nevertheless, I shall not withhold my opinion; and thus the learned will not be able to mock me for being assertive, nor the unlearned look to me as a teacher, but both may regard me rather as one who discusses and investigates than as one who

knows.

I consider all these phenomena similar to dreams. Now dreams are sometimes false and sometimes true, sometimes troubled and sometimes calm; and true dreams are sometimes quite similar to future events or even clear forecasts, while at other times they are predictions given with dark meanings and, as it were, in figurative expressions. And the same is to be said of all these visions. But men like to gaze in wonder at what is strange and seek the causes of the unusual, while they generally do not care to know about daily occurrences of this sort, even though their origin may often be more obscure. In the case of words, namely, the signs that we use in speech, when an unusual one is heard, men ask first what it is (that is, what it means), and after learning this, they enquire about its origin; and yet there are many words in use in our daily speech about whose origin they are content to be ignorant. Similarly, when an unusual event occurs, whether in the material or spiritual order, they anxiously enquire about its causes and its nature and demand an explanation from the savants.

39. When, for example, someone asks me the meaning of *catus*, and I say that it means “wise” or “sharp,” and when he, not satisfied, goes on to enquire about the origin of *catus*, I usually rejoin and ask about the origin of *acutus* (“sharp”). On this point he would be equally uninformed, but because of the familiarity of the word he would willingly bear his ignorance about its origin. But when a word has a sound which is strange to his ears, he does not think he knows its meaning unless he traces out its derivation.

And so, when anyone asks me about the origin of the images of bodies that appear in ecstasy, an experience that happens but rarely to the soul, I, in turn, ask about the origin of the images that appear daily to the soul in sleep—an enquiry which men care little or nothing about. One would think that the nature of these visions was less remarkable because they are daily occurrences, or less interesting because they are a common experience. Or, if men do well in not investigating them, they

will do better in restraining their curiosity about extraordinary visions; but I am much more impressed and profoundly amazed when I consider the rapidity and ease with which the soul fashions within itself images of bodies seen through the eyes of the body than when I consider the visions of dreams and even of ecstasies. But whatever the nature of these images may be, it is certainly not corporeal. Whoever is not satisfied with this knowledge may enquire about their origin from others. I confess my ignorant

CHAPTER 19

The causes of visions.

41. The point I wish to make can easily be established from an examination of examples. Such bodily states as pallor, blushing, trembling, and even sickness are caused sometimes by the body, sometimes by the soul. They are caused by the body when a humor or some food or other matter entering the body from without diffuses itself. But they are caused by the soul when it is disturbed by fear or confused by shame or moved by anger or love or any other emotion; and this is natural inasmuch as the animating and ruling force in man even stirs him rather deeply at times when it itself is deeply moved.

And similarly, when the soul directs its gaze to objects which are presented to it, not through the bodily senses but through an incorporeal substance, and when on these occasions it cannot decide whether it beholds bodies or the likenesses of bodies, its state is attributable sometimes to the body and sometimes to a spirit. It can be ascribed to the body either because of a natural phenomenon such as the dreams that come in sleep, for sleep is a function of the body, or because of ill health. Now in the latter state the senses are sometimes afflicted with a disorder, as when delirious people see bodies as well as visions that appear like bodies and seem present before their eyes; and sometimes the senses cease operating altogether, as often has happened in the case of people suffering from a serious and prolonged illness, who were without sensation for some time, though present in

their bodies, and who later, returning, have stated that they saw many objects.

But these visions can be attributed to the action of a spirit when sound and healthy people are transported, whether through the senses of the body they see real bodies, and in the spirit, likenesses indistinguishable from bodies, or completely carried out of their senses and perceiving nothing at all through them, they dwell by this spiritual vision amidst the likenesses of bodies. But when an evil spirit transports men thus, he either possesses them or makes them frenzied or false prophets. When, on the contrary, a good spirit transports them, he inspires them to give a reliable account of mysteries; or if understanding is also imparted, he either makes them true prophets or for the moment aids them in seeing and narrating the vision that must be revealed through them.

CHAPTER 20

Impediments to sense perception.

42. But when the body is the cause of these visions, it does not present the object, for it has not the power to fashion anything spiritual. Rather, when the pathway of attention, which proceeds from the brain and regulates sensation, is dormant or disturbed or blocked, the soul itself which cannot of itself give up this function, being entirely or partially hindered by the body from sensing corporeal objects or directing the force of its attention to such objects, gathers together in the spirit the likenesses of bodies or gazes upon those that are presented to it. If it gathers them together itself, they are simply images of objects once seen; whereas, if it gazes upon images presented to it, they are the images of a vision.

Finally, when the eyes are suffering from some ailment or have ceased to function altogether because there no longer exists in the brain the cause that cooperates in directing the attention of sensation, ocular vision ceases; but it is the body that hinders corporeal vision. Blind people see objects while asleep rather than while awake. In the brain of the sleeper the path of sensation that leads the attention to

the eyes is dormant; and so the attention, turning elsewhere, beholds dream images as if they were the forms of bodies present to the eyes. The upshot is that the sleeper, thinking he is awake, fancies that he beholds not likenesses of bodies but bodies themselves; but when blind people are awake, the attention of vision is led along its customary way until it arrives at the eyes; and then it is not sent forth but remains there. Hence the blind realize that they are awake and watching in darkness even through the day rather than sleeping by day or by night.

Those who are not blind usually see nothing with their eyes when they sleep with them open, but this does not mean that they see nothing at all, since in spirit they see the images of dreams; if, however, they are awake and have their eyes closed, they enjoy neither the sights of dreams nor those of waking hours. Still the path of sensation is not dormant or disturbed or blocked, but goes forth from the brain to the eyes and leads the attention of the soul to the very gates of the body, though they are barred. And the result is simply that images of bodies are conjured up, though they are never mistaken for bodies that are perceived through the eyes.

43. It is rather important, then, to determine the location of an impediment to sense perception, when such an impediment exists in the body. If there is no obstacle except at the entrances and doors of the senses in the eyes, or the ears, or the other sense organs, the perception of bodies is simply shut off; but the attention of the soul is not turned elsewhere so as to induce it to mistake bodily images for bodies themselves.

But if the cause is in the brain, from which there are pathways for sensation leading to external objects, the channels that carry the attention are dormant or disturbed or blocked. Now the soul in this condition does not lose the tendency to direct its energies through these channels, through which it normally sees or perceives external objects. Hence it fashions similar objects so vividly that it is unable to distinguish images of bodies from real bodies, and it knows not whether it is dealing with the one or the other. When it does know, its knowledge is far

different from the knowledge it has when in conscious thought it ponders over or chances upon the likenesses of bodies. This phenomenon cannot be understood at all except by those who have experienced it. I, for one, have realized while asleep that I was seeing something in my sleep; but the distinction I made between the likenesses of bodies which I saw and real bodies was lacking in that sureness with which we usually make this distinction when we ponder over such images with closed eyes or when we are placed in darkness. The attention of the soul may be carried as far as the sense organs when they are impaired; or within the brain itself, from which the attention normally goes out to external objects, it may for some special reason be directed elsewhere. In either case, the soul may sometimes know that it is not seeing bodies but the likenesses of bodies; or, when less instructed, it may judge even these likenesses to be bodies but realize that it perceives them not with the body but with the spirit. Yet the attention of the mind is such that it operates far differently in these circumstances than it does when functioning in the organs of the body. Hence, also, the blind know they are awake when with a sure insight they distinguish between imaginative representations of bodies and the bodies themselves which they cannot see.

CHAPTER 21

In spiritual vision different causes do not mean different kinds of objects.

44. But when in spite of the good health of the body and the normal functioning of the senses, the soul is carried off by some mysterious spiritual power to a vision that contains images of bodies, a difference in the manner of the experience does not argue a difference in the nature of the objects seen, since there is a difference even in those causes that have their origin in the body, and sometimes the causes are even quite contrary. In the case of those who are delirious but not asleep, it is rather in the head that the paths of sensation are disturbed. The result is that they see objects that are ordinarily seen only in dreams, when the attention is turned

from the perceptions of waking hours and directed to visions of this sort. Hence, although the one case occurs outside of sleep and the other in sleep, still the objects seen do not differ in nature, for they belong to the spirit in which and from which the likenesses of bodies arise.

Similarly, when the soul of a man, sound in body and wide awake, is carried off by some mysterious spiritual force so that he sees in spirit the imaginative likenesses of bodies rather than bodies themselves, the cause of the derangement of the attention may be different in different cases, but the nature of the objects seen is the same.

And we must not suppose that when the cause is in the body, the soul always ponders over images of bodies by its own power, without any prophetic insight, as it normally does in thought; and that it is only when the soul is taken up by a spirit to gaze at such visions that they are revealed to it by God. For Scripture clearly says, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and the young men shall see visions, and the old men shall dream dreams, thus attributing both to the work of God. And again it says, An angel of the Lord appeared to the man in a dream, saying, Do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife, and on another occasion, Take the Child and go into Egypt.

CHAPTER 22

The difficulty of explaining how certain extraordinary events are seen in the spirit.

45. I do not believe, then, that the spirit of a man is taken up by a good spirit to see these images unless they have some special meaning. But when the body causes the human spirit to direct its gaze intently upon them, it must not be thought that they always have a meaning. However, they have a meaning when they are inspired by a spirit that reveals something, whether it is to a man in sleep or to one who is afflicted with some bodily ailment that takes him out of his senses. I have known instances of people, wide awake, suffering no affliction and disturbed by

no madness, who were acted upon by some mysterious influence and inspired with thoughts that became prophecies when they spoke them out. And this has happened not only to those who intended something quite different, as in the case of Caiphas, the high priest, who prophesied though he had no intention of prophesying, but also to those who undertook to pronounce a divination about some future event.

46. A certain group of youths on a journey, wishing to play a hoax in a spirit of jest, pretended to be astrologers, though they knew nothing at all about the twelve signs. Observing that their host listened to their talk with amazement and affirmed that it was quite true, they went on confidently with further pronouncements. Still he remained spellbound and agreed to it all. Finally, he asked them about the lot of his son, who had been away a long time. He was anxious about the boy and feared some mishap, because the delay was unforeseen. Thinking only of making the father happy for the moment, they gave no thought to the fact that he would discover the truth after their departure; and since they were soon to depart, they replied that he was safe, was on his way home, and would arrive that very day. They had no fear that after the lapse of a day the man might follow them and expose them. But to come to the point, while they were still in the house and were just getting ready to go, the son himself suddenly appeared.

47. On another occasion, while a certain pagan festival was being celebrated in a place where there were many idols, a young man was dancing to the accompaniment of a flute. Though not frenzied by any spirit, he was giving a comic imitation of the frenzied devotees, and his audience understood this. At these festivals it was customary for the sacrifices to be offered and for the worshipers to go through their wild rites before the midday meal; afterwards any young men who wished to give a mock performance were allowed to do so. It was thus that the man on this day was entertaining the smiling crowd that surrounded him, when in a spirit of

fun he called for silence. He then predicted that on that very night in the nearby forest a man would be killed by a lion and that at dawn the next day everyone would desert the place of the festival and gather to see the body of the dead man. And it turned out exactly that way, although from his antics it had been quite clear to the bystanders that he had had no extraordinary or clairvoyant experience at all but had made the statement in a light and playful mood. His own amazement at what happened was all the greater because he was more keenly aware of the spirit in which he had said the words.

48. How do these things enter the spirit of man? Are they fashioned there? Or are they implanted fully formed and seen as a consequence of some sort of union, so that angels reveal to men their own thoughts and the likenesses of bodies which they fashion beforehand in their own spirit through their knowledge of future events? In such a way the angels see our thoughts; not, of course, with eyes, because they see not by body but by spirit. But there is this difference: they know our thoughts whether we will it or not, whereas we cannot know theirs unless they reveal them. For they have the power, I believe, of hiding their thoughts by spiritual means, just as we can hide our bodies from the eyes of others by setting up some obstacle to obstruct their view. And what takes place in our spirit to allow a man sometimes to see only images that have a meaning, while he is unaware of the fact that they do mean something; and at other times to allow him to perceive that such images have some meaning, while he is left in ignorance of what they mean; and at still other times to allow the human soul through some sort of fuller revelation to see these images with the spirit and understand their meaning with the mind? It is extremely difficult to find an answer to these questions; and even if I had the knowledge, it would be a great task to discuss and explain the matter.

CHAPTER 23

Summary of the ways in which the likenesses of bodies are seen in the spirit.

49. But I think it is sufficient now to demonstrate this one fact, namely, that there exists in us a spiritual nature in which the likenesses of bodily things are formed. This spiritual nature functions when we come into contact with a body by means of our bodily senses, and the image of it is immediately formed in our spirit and stored in our memory; or when we think of bodies previously known but now absent, in order to form from them a spiritual vision of those things that were already in our spirit even before we began to think of them; or when we behold likenesses of bodies which we do not know but whose existence we do not doubt, not as they are in themselves but as they happen to present themselves to us; or when we arbitrarily and fancifully think of other objects that do not exist or whose existence is unknown to us; or when various forms of the likenesses of bodies come into our minds from any source whatever without our concurrence and against our will.

Again, it is the spiritual nature in us that operates when we are about to perform some bodily action and we order beforehand the stages of it, first going through it all in thought; or when in an act itself, whether we are speaking or going through some bodily motion, all the movements of the body are anticipated through their likenesses in our spirit in order that they may be executed, for no syllable, however short, could be pronounced in its proper place unless previously planned in thought. It is the spiritual nature of the soul also that is affected when dreams come in sleep, either with or without a meaning; or when, because of ill health, the inner pathways of sensation are disturbed and the spirit so confuses images of bodies with real bodies that it is impossible or nearly impossible to distinguish between them and this may happen whether the images have a meaning or not; or when, under the impact of some serious illness or bodily suffering that obstructs the interior paths by which the attention of the soul is sent forth and goes out to

perceive its object through the sense organs, images of bodies having some meaning, or appearing without any meaning, arise or are presented while the spirit is in a state of unconsciousness more profound than sleep.

Finally, it is the spiritual nature of the soul that is acted upon when, without any bodily cause, the soul is seized by a spirit and is raised up to view such likenesses of bodies, using meanwhile the senses of the body also and confusing the images with the objects of the senses; or when the soul is taken hold of by a spirit and is so completely removed from the bodily senses that it is engaged by nothing but the likenesses of bodies in spiritual vision, in which state I am inclined to doubt whether there can be a vision of something that has no meaning.

CHAPTER 24

Spiritual vision is more excellent than corporeal vision, intellectual more excellent than spiritual.

50. Hence this spiritual nature, in which are produced not bodies but the likenesses of bodies, enjoys visions of a kind inferior to those which the mind or intelligence with its light beholds. For it is by this latter power that objects of a lower order are judged and those realities are beheld which are not bodies and have no forms similar to bodies: such as the mind itself and every good affection of the soul to which are opposed its vices, which are rightly censured and condemned in men. How else can the intellect itself be seen except by intellection? In this way also we see charity, joy, peace, longanimity, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, continency, and the rest, by which we draw near to God, and finally God Himself, from whom are all things, through whom are all things, and in whom are all things.

51. In one and the same soul, then, there are different visions: by means of the body it perceives objects such as the corporeal heaven and earth and everything that can

be known in them in the degree that they are capable of being known; with the spirit it sees likenesses of bodies, a matter that I have already discussed at length; and with the mind it understands those realities that are neither bodies nor the likenesses of bodies. But there is, of course, a hierarchy in these visions, one being superior to another. For spiritual vision is more excellent than corporeal, and intellectual vision more excellent than spiritual. Corporeal vision cannot take place without spiritual, since at the very moment when we encounter a body by means of bodily sensation, there appears in the soul something not identical with the object perceived but resembling it. If this did not happen, there would be no sensation by which exterior objects are perceived.

For it is not the body that perceives, but the soul by means of the body; and the soul uses the body as a sort of messenger in order to form within itself the object that is called to its attention from the outside world. Hence corporeal vision cannot take place unless there is a concomitant spiritual vision; but no distinction is made between the two until the bodily sensation has passed and the object perceived by means of the body is found in the spirit. On the other hand, there can be spiritual vision without corporeal vision, namely, when the likenesses of absent bodies appear in the spirit, and when many such images are fashioned by the free activity of the soul or are presented to it in spite of itself. Moreover, spiritual vision needs intellectual vision if a judgment is to be made upon its contents, but intellectual vision does not need spiritual, which is of a lower order.

And so corporeal vision is inferior to the spiritual, and both are inferior to the intellectual. When, therefore, we read, The spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no man, we should not take spiritual as pertaining to the spirit which is distinguished from the mind as in the text, I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the mind also, but we must understand it as deriving from that other sense, as in the following: But be renewed in the spirit of your mind. For I have already shown above that the name spirit in another sense of the word is given also to the mind itself, to that power, namely, by which the spiritual man

judges all things. Hence I believe that spiritual vision can be reasonably and naturally said to occupy a kind of middle ground between intellectual and corporeal vision. For I suppose that a thing which is not really a body, but like a body, can be appropriately said to be in the middle between that which is truly a body and that which is neither a body nor like a body.

CHAPTER 25

Corporeal and spiritual vision can err, but not intellectual vision.

52. But the soul is deceived by the images of things, not because of any fault of these images but because of its own erroneous opinion when through lack of understanding it confuses different objects because of their similarity. It is deceived, therefore, in corporeal vision when it fancies that what happens in the senses of the body takes place in bodies outside, as when people on a moving ship seem to see stationary objects on shore in motion, or when those who gaze at the heavens think they see stars at rest which are actually moving. Such is the case, too, when the rays coming from the eyes are not focused, and two lamps seem to shine where there is only one, or when an oar in the water appears to be broken. Many other similar appearances might be mentioned. The same may be said when the soul takes one object for another that has a similar color, sound, odor, taste, or touch. Thus a salve mixed with wax in a cooking vessel is mistaken for a vegetable, and the rumble of a passing carriage is thought to be thunder, and, when no other sense but that of smell is employed, balm is taken for citrus; so also a dish that has a bit of sweet flavoring tastes as if it were made of honey, and a strange ring felt in the dark is taken for gold, when it is actually copper or silver. The same may be said, too, when the eyes encounter objects suddenly and unexpectedly, and the soul in its confusion fancies it sees dream images or some similar spiritual vision.

Hence, in all cases of corporeal vision, recourse is had to the testimony of other

senses, and above all to that of the mind and reason, so that we may discover the truth in these matters as far as it can be discovered. But in spiritual vision, namely, in the likenesses of bodies seen by the spirit, the soul is deceived when it judges the objects of its vision to be real bodies, or when it attaches some property of its own fancy and false conjecture to bodies that it has not seen but merely conjures up in imagination. But in the intuitions of the intellect it is not deceived. For either it understands, and then it possesses truth; or if it does not possess truth, it fails to understand. And so it is one thing for the soul to err in the objects which it sees and another for it to err because it does not see.

CHAPTER 26

Two kinds of rapture: spiritual and intellectual.

53. There are occasions, then, when the soul is carried off to objects of vision that are similar to corporeal things and are seen by the spirit in such a way that the soul is quite removed from the senses of the body, more than in sleep but less than in death. In such cases it is by virtue of divine guidance and assistance that it realizes it is seeing in a spiritual way not bodies but the likenesses of bodies. Similarly, it sometimes happens that a man in his sleep is aware that he is dreaming even before he awakes. And in spiritual vision it may also be that future events, represented under images present to the soul, are clearly recognized as future because of the fact that divine assistance is given to the human mind or that someone in the vision explains the meaning of it, as happened to John in the Apocalypse. Now the revelation given in such a case must be important, even though it may happen that the man who receives it does not know whether he went out of the body during the vision or was still in the body but with his spirit withdrawn from the bodily senses. If this information is not revealed to a man who experiences such an ecstasy, it is possible for him to remain in ignorance on this

point.

54. Moreover, if a man has not only been carried out of the bodily senses to be among the likenesses of bodies seen by the spirit, but is also carried out of these latter to be conveyed, as it were, to the region of the intellectual or intelligible, where transparent truth is seen without any bodily likeness, his vision is darkened by no cloud of false opinion, and there the virtues of the soul are not tedious and burdensome. For then there is no restraining of lust by the effort of temperance, no bearing of adversity by fortitude, no punishing of wicked deeds by justice, no avoiding of evil by prudence. The one virtue and the whole of virtue there is to love what you see, and the supreme happiness is to possess what you love. For there beatitude is imbibed at its source, whence some few drops are sprinkled upon this life of ours, that amid the trials of this world we may spend our days with temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence.

It is surely in pursuit of this end, where there will be secure peace and the unutterable vision of truth, that man undertakes the labor of restraining his desires, of bearing adversities, of relieving the poor, of opposing deceivers. There the brightness of the Lord is seen, not through a symbolic or corporeal vision, as it was seen on Mount Sinai, nor through a spiritual vision such as Isaiah saw and John in the Apocalypse, but through a direct vision and not through a dark image, as far as the human mind elevated by the grace of God can receive it. In such a vision God speaks face to face to him whom He has made worthy of this communion. And here we are speaking not of the face of the body but of that of the mind.

CHAPTER 27

The vision granted to Moses.

55. Moses, as we read in Exodus, had yearned to see God, not as he had seen Him on the mountain, nor as he saw Him in the tabernacle, but in His divine essence without the medium of any bodily creature that might be presented to the senses of mortal flesh. It was his desire to see God, not by imaginary likenesses of bodies in the spirit but by a vision of the divine essence as far as this can be attained by a rational and intellectual creature when withdrawn from all bodily senses and from all obscure symbols of the spirit.

For, according to Holy Scripture, Moses said, If, therefore, I have found favor in Thy sight, show me Thyself, that I may see Thee clearly. Now just before this we read, And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. He realized, therefore, what he saw, and he longed for what he did not see. For shortly after this, God said to him, For you have found grace in My sight, and I have known you before all. And he replied, Show me Thy brightness. And then, indeed, an answer clothed in a figure, which it would be tedious now to explain, was given him by the Lord, who said to him, You cannot see My face and live; for man shall not see My face and live. And then God continued, Behold there is a place with Me and you shall stand upon the rock. As soon as My Majesty will pass, I will place you upon an eminence of the rock and cover you with My hand till I pass; and I will take away My hand, and then you shall see My back parts; for My face shall not be revealed to you.

However, the account that follows in the sacred text does not state that this took place in a corporeal way, and this shows clearly enough that the words are to be taken figuratively as referring to the Church. For the Church is the place with the Lord, because it is His temple and is built upon a rock; and the rest of this narrative agrees with this interpretation. But if Moses had not merited to see the brightness of God, which he ardently desired, God would not say, as He does in the Book of Numbers, to Aaron and Mary, the brother and sister of Moses, Hear My words: If there be a prophet among you, in a vision, I, the Lord, will become known to him, and I will speak to him in his sleep. Not thus with My servant

Moses: in all My house, he is the faithful one. Mouth to mouth I will speak to him in My essence and not through obscure signs, and he has seen the brightness of the Lord. This, indeed, is not to be understood as referring to a bodily substance made present to the senses of the flesh. For certainly God spoke thus to Moses face to face, the one in the presence of the other; but on that occasion Moses said to God, Show me Thyself. And now also, addressing those whom He reprimanded, and above whom He thus exalted the merits of Moses, God spoke in this way through a corporeal creature, present to the senses of the body.

In that other manner, then, in His own divine essence, He speaks in an incomparably more intimate and inward manner, in an unutterable converse where no man beholds Him while living this mortal life in the senses of the body. This vision is granted only to him who in some way dies to this life, whether he quits the body entirely or is turned away and carried out of the bodily senses, so that he really knows not to use the words of St. Paul whether he is in the body or out of the body when he is carried off to this vision.

CHAPTER 28

The third heaven and Paradise may be understood as the third kind of vision.

56. If, then, the Apostle has given the name third heaven to this third type of vision, which is superior to every corporeal vision by which bodies are perceived through the senses of the body, and superior also to all spiritual vision by which the likenesses of bodies are beheld not by the mind but by the spirit, in this vision the brightness of God is seen by those whose hearts are purified for the vision. Hence it is said, Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God, not through any symbol fashioned in a corporeal or spiritual manner, as if through a mirror in a riddle, but face to face or mouth to mouth, as it is said of Moses, through a vision, that is, of God's own essence, according to the limited measure that it can be comprehended by a mind distinct from God Himself, even after it has been

cleansed from all earthly stain and carried away from all body and likeness of body. From Him we are exiled, laden with a mortal and corruptible burden, as long as we walk by faith and not by vision, even when we live justly in this world.

But why should we not believe that, when the great Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles was carried up to such an extraordinary vision, God wished to show him the life that is to be ours forever after this life on earth? And why should not the name paradise be given to this also, as well as to that place where Adam lived in the body among the shade trees and the fruit trees? For the Church also, who gathers us into the bosom of her charity, is called a paradise with the fruit of the orchard. But this was said figuratively on the ground that the Church was signified, through a figure of what was to come, by that Paradise where Adam actually was.

And yet a more thoughtful consideration of the matter might possibly suggest that the corporeal Paradise in which Adam lived his corporeal life was a sign both of this life of the saints now existing in the Church and of that eternal life which will be when this life is done. Thus Jerusalem, which is translated the vision of peace, although it designates a certain earthly city, is a sign of Jerusalem, our eternal mother in heaven. In the latter sense it can refer to those who in hope have been saved and in their hope wait with patience for what they do not see. It is because of these that Scripture says, Many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that has a husband. Or it can refer to the holy angels themselves throughout the Church of God's manifold wisdom, with whom we are to enjoy a peaceful and unending abode after this exile.

CHAPTER 29

Whether there are more than three heavens is difficult to say.

57. In explaining the third heaven to which St. Paul was carried, some may wish to conjecture the existence of a fourth heaven also, and above this still more heavens,

beneath which is found the third heaven; and some actually do say that there are seven, eight, nine, or even ten; and in the one called the firmament they assert that there are many heavens and accordingly argue and conclude that they are corporeal. But to discuss these arguments and theories at the present time would take too long.

Moreover, one can hold, or demonstrate if he is able, that in spiritual or intellectual visions there are also many grades and that these are distinguished according to a progression of revelations under the influence of more or less illumination. Now whatever the facts may be and whatever different opinions men may be pleased to adopt, I have thus far been unable to recognize or maintain any objects or visions other than the three kinds perceived by the body and the spirit and the mind. But in establishing the number and degrees of difference in the various classes and in determining the relative grades of excellence in them, I admit my ignorance.

CHAPTER 30

Degrees of excellence in likenesses of bodies seen in the spirit.

58. Now in the corporeal light of this world there is the heaven which we see above the earth and from which shine forth the luminous bodies and stars, which are far superior to earthly bodies. So, too, in the spiritual order, wherein the likenesses of bodies are seen in a kind of incorporeal light that is proper to them, there are certain objects more excellent and truly divine, which angels reveal in wondrous ways. Whether by some sort of union or intermingling they have the facility and power to make their visions ours also, or in some way know how to fashion a vision in our spirit, this is a difficult matter to understand and still more difficult to explain. But in the ordinary course of our daily life there are other objects that arise in various ways from our spirit itself or are, after a fashion, suggested to the spirit by the body, according as we have been influenced by the flesh or by the

mind. Thus men in their waking hours think of their troubles, turning over in their minds the likenesses of bodily things; and so in their sleep, too, they frequently dream of something they need. The reason for this is that greed is the motive force of their business dealings; and when they happen to go to sleep hungry and thirsty, they are often after food and drink with open mouth. Now, in my opinion, when these objects are compared with the revelations of angels, they ought to be assigned the same relative value that we give, in the corporeal order, to earthly bodies in comparison with celestial bodies.

CHAPTER 31

The soul longs to see the Light, which is God, illuminating the intellect, but cannot do so except when carried off in ecstasy.

59. So, also, among the objects of the intellect, there are some that are seen in the soul itself; for example, the virtues to which the vices are opposed, either virtues which will endure, such as piety, or virtues that are useful for this life and not destined to remain in the next, as faith, by which we believe what we do not see, and hope, by which we await with patience the life that shall be, and patience itself, by which we bear every adversity until we arrive at the goal of our desires.

These virtues, of course, and other similar ones, which are quite necessary for us now in living out our exile, will have no place in the blessed life, for the attainment of which they are necessary. And yet even they are seen with the intellect; for they are not bodies, nor have they forms similar to bodies.

But distinct from these objects is the Light by which the soul is illumined, in order that it may see and truly understand everything, either in itself or in the light. For the Light is God Himself, whereas the soul is a creature; yet, since it is rational and intellectual, it is made in His image. And when it tries to behold the Light, it trembles in its weakness and finds itself unable to do so. Yet from this source comes all the understanding it is able to attain. When, therefore, it is thus carried

off and, after being withdrawn from the senses of the body, is made present to this vision in a more perfect manner not by a spatial relation, but in a way proper to its being, it also sees above itself that Light in whose illumination it is enabled to see all the objects that it sees and understands in itself.

CHAPTER 32

The soul at death is transported with a likeness of the body to a spiritual place of punishment or of peace.

60. Now it may be asked whether the soul on its departure from the body is brought to some corporeal region, or to an incorporeal one that is like the corporeal, or to neither, but rather to that which is more excellent than bodies and likenesses of bodies. To this question I should reply without hesitation that it is not brought to a corporeal region unless it is transported in union with a body or in a nonspatial way.

The further problem, whether the soul has some sort of body after it departs from this body, may be explained by anyone who can. I do not think it has. But it is brought to a realm that is spiritual in accordance with its merits. This region, in one case, is a place of punishment, whose nature is similar to that of bodies; such a place as has often been shown to those who have been carried out of the senses of the body and, while lying as if in death, have seen the punishments of hell. Those who have undergone this experience were accompanied by some sort of likeness of the body, and through it they were able to be transported to those regions and to perceive them by the likenesses of their senses. For the soul has a likeness of its body when the body lies senseless though not yet really dead and the soul is carried off to see those sights that many have told of after being restored to life. Why, then, should it not have a likeness of the body when death really overtakes it and it finally departs from the body? It follows, therefore, that the soul is transported either to a place of punishment of this kind or to another place of

bodily likenesses, not, however, of punishment but of peace and joy.

61. Now it surely cannot be said that those punishments are false or that that peace and joy are false; for there is falsity only when, through an erroneous judgment, we mistake one thing for another. Peter was certainly in error when he saw the dish and fancied that bodies were in it rather than likenesses of bodies. No less was he in error when, on another occasion, he was released from his chains by an angel and went forth walking in the body and confronting bodily forms, yet thinking all the while that he was beholding a vision. For on the dish there were only spiritual forms resembling corporeal forms, whereas the actual sight of a man freed from his chains was made in a miraculous way to seem like a spiritual image. Now the soul was in error in these two cases only in so far as it took one thing for another. Hence, once the soul has left the body, the objects acting upon it for good or ill may be like the corporeal and not real corporeal objects, since the soul appears to itself in the likeness of its own body. Yet these objects do exist, and the joy and vexation produced by a spiritual substance are real. For even in sleep there is a vast difference between being in joyful and in sad circumstances in our dreams. Hence some people have grieved on waking from dreams in which they had had their heart's desire; and on other occasions, awaking from dreams in which they had been shaken with terrors and tormented with suffering, they have feared the return of sleep and the recurrence of the same afflictions. And surely we cannot doubt that the afflictions of hell are more vivid and so felt more keenly; for even those who have been carried out of the senses of the body have said afterwards that they have been through a more vivid experience than that of a dream, though of course it was less vivid than it would have been had they died. Hell, then, indeed exists, but I am of the opinion that its nature is spiritual rather than corporeal.

CHAPTER 33

Hell and the bosom of Abraham.

62. No hearing should be given to the advocates of the theory that hell is found in this life and not after death. Let them devise their interpretations of the poets' fictions. We must not depart from the authority of Sacred Scripture; on this alone our faith in this matter rests. We may, however, be able to show that the wise men among the pagans had no doubt at all about the reality of the lower world, where the souls of the dead are received after this life. But why the lower world is said to be under the earth, if it is not a corporeal place, or why it is called the lower world, if it is not under the earth, these are questions that are discussed, and not without reason. But the soul is incorporeal; and this I proclaim confidently, not as my opinion but as certain knowledge. However, anyone who says that it is impossible for the soul to have a likeness of the body or of any members of the body ought also to deny that the soul in sleep sees itself walking or sitting or being borne away and returned, now this way, now that, on foot or through the air. None of this happens without some likeness of the body. Hence, if the soul in the lower world bears this likeness, which is not corporeal, but similar to a body, it seems also that it is in a place not corporeal but like the corporeal, whether at rest or in torment.
63. I admit, however, that I have not yet found the term lower world or hell applied to the place where the souls of the just are at rest. Moreover, it is believed, and not without reason, that the soul of Christ went to that very region where sinners are tormented in order to release from their suffering those who He decreed should be released according to the inscrutable ways of His justice. For I do not see how else we can interpret the text, God raised Him up from the dead, having loosed the pangs of hell because it was not possible that He should be held fast by them, unless we understand that He loosed the pangs of certain souls in hell in virtue of that power by which He is Lord. For to Him every knee does bend of those in

heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and because of His power He could not have been held in bonds by the pangs that He loosed.

Abraham and the poor man in his bosom, that is to say, in his peaceful retreat, were not in the midst of pain. Between their restful abode and the infernal torments we read that a great gulf was fixed, but they are not said to be in hell. For Christ said, It came to pass that the poor man died and was borne away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; but the rich man also died and was buried. And, being in hell, in the midst of torments and so forth. Accordingly we see that hell is mentioned not in reference to the repose of the poor man but in reference to the punishment of the rich man.

64. As for the words of Jacob to his son, You will bring down my old age with sorrow unto hell, he feared, it seems, that he would be so distraught because of his profound sorrow that he would go to the hell of sinners rather than to the resting place of the blessed. For sorrow is no small evil for the soul. Even St. Paul was quite fearful that a certain man might be overwhelmed by too much sorrow. Hence, as I said, I have not found any passage in Scripture, at least in the canonical books, where the term hell is to be taken in a good sense. I am still looking for such a passage and can think of none, but I doubt whether anybody could tolerate an interpretation of Abraham's bosom and the resting place to which the angels carried the devoted poor man in anything but a good sense, and so I do not see how we may believe that that resting place is in hell.

CHAPTER 34

Paradise and the third heaven.

65. But while I seek an answer to this question, whether successfully or otherwise, I am compelled by the length of this book to bring it at last to an end. We began our discussion with the question of Paradise, basing it on the statement of St. Paul,

where he says that he knows a man who was caught up to the third heaven, though he knows not whether it was in the body or out of the body, and that this man was caught up into Paradise and heard secret words that man may not repeat. We do not, then, rashly determine whether Paradise is in the third heaven or whether St. Paul was caught up to the third heaven and then again to Paradise. For the word paradise properly means any wooded place, but figuratively it can also be used for any spiritual region, as it were, where the soul is in a happy state. The third heaven, therefore, whatever it is and it is, indeed, something wonderfully and singularly sublime, is Paradise; and so also a certain joy springing from a good conscience within man himself is Paradise. Hence the Church also, in the saints who live temperately and justly and devoutly, is rightly called Paradise, vigorous as it is with an abundance of graces and with pure delights. Even in the midst of tribulations she glories in her very suffering, greatly rejoicing because, according to the multitude of the sorrows in her heart, the comforts of God give joy to her soul.

How much more truly, then, can Abraham's bosom after this life also be called Paradise, where there is no temptation and where there is such wonderful rest after all the sufferings of this life. There, also, there is a light that belongs to that state, different from light elsewhere and quite excellent in its nature. It was this light that the rich man saw from his torments in the darkness of hell; and though he saw it from such a great distance, because there was a vast gulf between them, nevertheless he saw it clearly enough to recognize there the poor man he had once despised.

66. If all this is so, hell is said or believed to be under the earth because of the way it is represented appropriately in the spirit by means of the likenesses of corporeal things. Now the souls of the dead who are deserving of hell have sinned through love of the flesh. They are affected, therefore, by the likenesses of bodies and are subjected to the same experience as the dead flesh itself buried under the earth.

Finally, hell is called the lower world, or *infernus* in Latin, because it is beneath the earth. In the corporeal world all the heavier bodies occupy a lower place if the natural tendency of their weight is not interfered with; and so in the spiritual order the gloomier realm is in a lower position. Hence the Greek word for hell is said to get its meaning from the fact that the place contains no delight.

And yet our Savior Himself, when He died for us, did not disdain to visit this part of the world. He could not have been ignorant of the fact that some were to be delivered from there in accordance with the mysteries of God's justice, and there He went to deliver them. Hence, when Christ said to the robber, This day you shall be with Me in Paradise, He promised to the man's soul not hell, where sins are punished, but the repose of Abraham's bosom; for Christ is everywhere, since He Himself is the Wisdom of God, reaching everywhere by reason of His purity. Or He may have referred to the paradise to which St. Paul was caught up after the third heaven, whether it is in the third heaven or anywhere else, if the abode of souls of the blessed is not one and the same thing called by different names.

67. It seems that we are right, then, in understanding the first heaven in general as this whole corporeal heaven to use a general term, namely, all that is above the waters and the earth, and the second heaven as the object of spiritual vision seen in bodily likenesses as, for instance, the vision seen by Peter in ecstasy when he saw the dish let down from above full of living creatures, and the third heaven as the objects seen by the mind after it has been so separated and removed and completely carried out of the senses and purified that it is able through the love of the Holy Spirit in a mysterious way to see and hear the objects in that heaven, even the essence of God and the Divine Word through whom all things have been made. If all this is true, then I believe that Paul was carried off to that third heaven and that there is a paradise which is more excellent than all others and is, if we may use the term, the paradise of paradises. For, if a good soul finds joy in the good that is in every creature, what is more excellent than that joy which is found in the

Word of God through whom all things have been made?

CHAPTER 35

Reunion of the soul with the glorified body necessary for perfect beatitude.

68. But why must the spirits of the departed be reunited with their bodies in the resurrection, if they can be admitted to the supreme beatitude without their bodies? This is a problem that may trouble some, but it is too difficult to be answered with complete satisfaction in this essay. There should, however, be no doubt that a man's mind, when it is carried out of the senses of the flesh in ecstasy, or when after death it has departed from the flesh, is unable to see the immutable essence of God just as the holy angels see it, even though it has passed beyond the likenesses of corporeal things. This may be because of some mysterious reason or simply because of the fact that it possesses a kind of natural appetite for managing the body. By reason of this appetite it is somehow hindered from going on with all its force to the highest heaven, so long as it is not joined with the body, for it is in managing the body that this appetite is satisfied.

Moreover, if the body is such that the management of it is difficult and burdensome, as is the case with this corruptible flesh, which is a load upon the soul coming as it does from a fallen race, the mind is much more readily turned away from the vision of the highest heaven. Hence it must necessarily be carried out of the senses of the flesh in order to be granted this vision as far as it is able. Accordingly, when the soul is made equal to the angels and receives again this body, no longer a natural body but a spiritual one because of the transformation that is to be, it will have the perfect measure of its being, obeying and commanding, vivified and vivifying with such a wonderful ease that what was once its burden will be its glory.

CHAPTER 36

The three kinds of vision will be made perfect in the blessed after the resurrection.

69. Then, indeed, there will be the three kinds of vision of which we have been speaking, but no error will induce us to mistake one thing for another, either in regard to corporeal objects or in regard to spiritual objects, or especially in regard to intellectual objects. There will be joy in the things of the intellect, and they will be far more luminously present to the soul than the corporeal forms that now surround us, which we perceive through the senses of our body. Yet many are now so absorbed in these material forms that they judge them to be the only ones, and they think that anything of a different order is simply nonexistent. But, although the corporeal world is more obvious, wise men live in the midst of it, clinging with greater surety to the world beyond bodily forms and beyond the likenesses of bodies, the world which they see with the intellect according to their measure, although they are not able to behold it in the mind so vividly as they do these other objects with the senses of the body.

But the holy angels, whose office it is to judge and administer the corporeal world, are not more intimately drawn to it, as if it were closer to them. And in the spirit they see its symbolic likenesses, and these they handle with such effectiveness that they can, by a revelation, introduce them even into the spirits of men. All the while they behold the immutable essence of the Creator with such clarity that because of this vision and the love it inspires they prefer the divine essence to all else, according to it judge everything, are directed towards it in all their impulses, and by it direct all the actions they perform.

Finally, although St. Paul was carried out of the senses of the body into the third heaven and Paradise, he was wanting in one point the full and perfect knowledge of things that the angels have: he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body. But this knowledge will not be wanting to us when we shall be reunited to our bodies at the resurrection of the dead and when this corruptible

body will put on incorruption and this mortal body will put on immortality. For everything will be clear without any error and without any ignorance, all things occupying their proper place, the corporeal, the spiritual, and the intellectual, in untainted nature and perfect beatitude.

CHAPTER 37

A different terminology used by other interpreters.

70. I know, of course, that some highly esteemed Catholic interpreters of Sacred Scripture before the present time have explained St. Paul's statement about the third heaven as implying a distinction between corporeal, animal, and spiritual men; and they add that Paul was carried off to contemplate in a wonderfully clear vision the realm of the incorporeal, which spiritual men, even in this life, love beyond all else and long to enjoy. My reasons for designating as spiritual and intellectual what they apparently have called animal and spiritual and I have simply used different terms for the same things, I have sufficiently explained in the earlier part of this book. If I have presented my explanation clearly in spite of my limited ability, the reader who is spiritual will approve it, or with the help of the Holy Spirit he will gain some profit from reading this book in order to become spiritual. And with this wish we at length bring our treatise of twelve books to a close.

St. Augustine, *St. Augustine: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, ed. Johannes Quasten, Walter J. Burghardt, and Thomas Comerford Lawler, trans. John Hammond Taylor, forty second ed., vol. II, *Ancient Christian Writers* New York; Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 1982, 205 to 231.

